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Business or Politics: Which is the More Ethical?

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Some years ago, in conversation with a long-time friend and a most successful business man, I ventured the statement that I believed that there was more dishonesty and rottenness in business than in practical politics or public affairs. It is needless to say he was shocked and expressed the opinion that was then and still is prevalent that politics are hopelessly, irremediably rotten and that business, if not wholly sacrosanct, was immeasurably cleaner and decenter. And yet in this very conversation in discussing the pros and cons of business life and the tendencies to utilize any and every means to gain an advantage over a competitor, he said: "My! Business is rotten, every one from the office boy to the superintendent looks for a tip or a rake-off." This is the view of most thoughtful observers. A writer in the old St. Louis *Mirror* put it thus aptly in an article which he entitled "Boodle in Business": "From the financier, who offers extravagant bonuses to every country banker who can cajole or induce unwary depositors into buying blocks of 'water-logged' stock, to the tradesman who buys your trade from your house-keeper, the whole business community is a mass of festering corruption. Presidents and directors of railroad companies, bound in honor to safeguard the interests of their stockholders, are financially interested in most of the companies which sell the supplies which the roads require to continue in running order. They become interested in the construction companies organized to build new sections of their own roads and line their pockets with the profits made from extravagant contracts, whose acceptance they approve. In less conspicuous walks of life, the same evil principle holds sway and many a Grand Jury is made up of men,

who, if they were cursed with the gift of introspection, must see that the accused, whom they are called on to indict, are no more guilty than themselves."

General statements of this kind, this writer frankly admitted, have rarely any value and so he proceeded to give some specific instances which had come within the scope of his comparatively limited experience. Here are some of them:

A trust which markets its goods in small packages, wrapped in an attractive label, spends from \$500,000 to \$750,000 a year on printing alone. It employs a man, an ex-lithographer, to examine these goods when delivered, who is on the pay-roll of nearly all the concerns which do this printing and who gets a weekly salary as regularly as any of their own employees. He is supposed to divide this return with the manager of the trust; and their employers know all about it.

Here is another incident which he related: A young man was arrested for the larceny of about \$200 from an importing house. A friend who knew his family intervened to save him from the consequences of his act. He found that the firm insisted on punishment, until the fact was brought out that the young man had been employed by them to defraud the Government through making fraudulent statements as to the value of importations, and at the same time to defraud their customers by the misrepresentation of goods. In other words, they expected the man to have two standards of honesty—but as James Jeffrey Roche well remarks, "The hardest thing to find is an honest partner in a swindle."

Lord Verulam, when accused of accepting bribes, pleaded in his own defence that he admitted he took bribes, but denied that they ever influenced his judgment because he took them from both sides! To such a pass has our mercantile life come that this defense is about all that can be offered in behalf of a great number of buyers for big houses. If they can show profitable balance sheets, employers seldom question the exactions imposed by their subordinates.

Years ago in New York City a great public work, which threatened to antagonize the railroad interests of the city, was under discussion. The idea of building the proposed road by

public subscription was suggested to the editor of a paper, renowned for its opposition to monopoly. It was pointed out that the newspaper in question could render a great public service by opening in its columns a subscription list for the stock. The editor thought it a great idea; but reported ten days later, that nothing could be done about it, because "the ——— estate (owned by the family of the proprietor of the paper) was one of the largest holders of Traction Company stock." It was notorious that no reflection on the management or operations of the Traction Company ever found its way "into the columns of the ——— which fairly rang with denunciations of every monopoly in which its proprietor was not interested!

Sundry other instances were cited by this writer, whose name I do not now recall, but all to the same effect. Lest it might be said that he had merely cited exceptional cases, let me cite the judgment of one who has been honored as few others by the confidence of his fellow business men—Alfred L. Baker. He has been president of the Chicago Association of Commerce and of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States. As president of an important financial institution he would not be likely to make unwarranted statements nor to take an extreme view of the evidence in any case. In an address before the Second National Conservation Conference he said: "During the last five years there is apparent among business men a larger recognition of their obligations to the community, and there is noticeably among the directors of many of our corporations a stricter sense of trusteeship. An anti-toxin to corruption has entered the veins of the business world. The phagocytes of health are overcoming the macrophages of decay. This is not a sudden revival, a temporary wave of reform, but a gradual evolution of the moral sense, a permanent advance in the idea of social justice. This moral awakening may show itself politically in an effort toward municipal reform, in legislative and municipal voters' leagues, in a determined resistance to monopoly, or for a larger control and a larger share in the profits of public franchise corporations. But in whatever form it seeks its expression it is the manifestation of an actively constructive principle which will soon become

so effective that the merchant and the man of affairs will overlook the near and personal view which appears on the stock ticker and take the larger view, the view that ultimately provides for the greatest good of the greatest number. This awakened sense of social justice is the new and deeper significance of the conservation movement."

The significance of this utterance lies in the fact that this big, broad-gauged business man accepted as a fact that corruption had entered the veins of the business man, that the "macrophags of decay" had permeated the business system.

Further on in the conversation with my friend to which I have referred, I ventured the statement that politics were unquestionably corrupt, although not to the extent that business was, and moreover that they had become corrupted through the temptation and machinations of business. This view was vigorously expressed by Rudolph Spreckles, of San Francisco, who in an address in which he told of the fight against the commercialized politics of that City's exploiters, said; "There never was a political crime committed that business was not at the back of it. Cut off that supply, and let the managers of these corporations take their stand and say, 'No bribe money.' If we find in operating our property that political bosses propose to hold us up, we are going to the people to get our redress and to get our rights. My experience with the people has taught me that they are fair and just and will give you what you are legitimately entitled to. It is right that you should know your own affairs and above all scrutinize the affairs of the corporations in which you hold stock, not only because you ought to know the source from which come your income and profits, but because it will pay you in money dividends, increased and saved."

One has only to recall the franchise scandals of New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis, to mention a few typical instances, to appreciate the force of this declaration.

If there were any doubt as to the need for improvement in the field of commercial ethics, one can recall the long continued efforts of the National Association of Credit Men to place business methods on a higher plane. At their meeting in June,

1925, Secretary Hoover devoted his address chiefly to scoring the "commercial criminals" whom he characterized as constituting a great economic waste and an enemy alike of business and the body politic.

This organization for a decade of years and more has been working not only to establish higher standards of business practices, but to secure their adoption and enforcement when adopted. Julius Henry Cohen, Esq., their distinguished counsel, in an address several years ago emphasized the relation of credit men to moral values, and declared they must take the place in political effort that has heretofore been occupied by the men who have been using politics for their own business ends.

Through its Committee on Commercial Ethics this Association has adopted a Code of Ethics, the important canons of which read as follows:

First: It is improper for a business man to participate with a lawyer in the doing of an act that would be improper and unprofessional for the lawyer to do.

Second: It undermines the integrity of business for business men to support lawyers who indulge in unprofessional practices. The lawyer who will do wrong things for one business man injures all business men. He not only injures his profession, but he is a menace to the business community.

Third: To punish and expose the guilty is one thing; to help the unfortunate but innocent to rise is another; but both duties are equally important, for both duties make for a higher moral standard of action on the part of business men.

Fourth: In times of trouble the unfortunate business man has the right to appeal to his fellow business men for advice and assistance. Selfish interests must be subordinated in such cases, and all must give their coöperation and help. If the debtor's assets are to be administered, all creditors must join in coöperating to that end. To fail in such a case is to fall below the best standards of commercial and association ethics.

In presenting these Canons the Committee pointed out that they touch directly certain existing evils in the relationship of business men with their attorneys and one another. They are

merely an educational propaganda, but the Association can well afford to keep them prominently before the membership and supplement them as succeeding committees may determine. The best efforts as an Association are to be exerted to win business men to a loyalty of higher ideals in their business relationships. "To awaken a sound commercial conscience through a definite program is regarded as fundamental."

The United States Chamber of Commerce has likewise made its contribution to helping to establish higher standards in business through its publication of a code under the title, "Principles of Business Conduct." These were summarized by the Hon. Edwin B. Parker, the chairman of the Committee who drafted it, with appropriate comment. He insisted that the standards were not new or experimental, but merely constitute a collation and codification of habits and rules which "already exist in the minds of American business men." The fifteen principles enumerated constitute a philosophy of business. They assert that confidence and integrity are the foundation of business; that the reward of business for service rendered is "a fair profit plus a safe reserve"; that business is obligated to give "equitable consideration" to capital, management, employes and the public; that permanency and continuity of service are basic aims of business; that contracts, written or oral, are literally binding, and that "changed conditions do not justify their cancellation without mutual consent"; that goods and services must be represented truthfully; that all excesses—inflation of credit, over-expansion, over-buying, over-stimulation of sales—are condemned; that unfair competition, by which is meant the practice of bad faith, deception, fraud or oppression, is "wasteful, despicable and a public wrong"; that controversies should, so far as possible, be settled "by voluntary agreement or impartial arbitration"; that incorporation of an enterprise does not absolve the individual from moral obligation; that restrictive legislation should be rendered unnecessary by business itself.

This recital of principles viewed in connection with the Federal Trade Commission reports and those of the Department of Research and Education of the Federal Council of Churches, manifestly has two important social aspects. The

first is the absence in the code of specific definitions and prescriptions. This is perhaps unavoidable because of the absence of agreement on the part of business men themselves concerning specific ethical practices as they affect fundamental social principles.

For example, the reward of business, as the Department says, is defined as a "fair profit" plus a "safe reserve," but no attempt is made to define either of these terms. It is stated that they should be commensurate with risks involved and foresight exercised, but since neither risks nor foresight can be accurately measured in terms of money values this statement indicates no workable standard. Again, the Chamber says that the relation between the several factors in industry—capital, management, employes, and the public—should be "equitable"; yet no hint is offered as to what the word "equitable," which is at the heart of present day industrial controversy, implies. Again, it is asserted that controversies are to be adjusted amicably "where possible," but no principle has as yet been worked out by which to determine with fairness to both sides what questions are "justifiable" nor when either side is justified in insisting that it has "nothing to arbitrate."

Uncertainty and ethical confusion arise also over the question of corporate responsibility. The statement that "corporate forms do not absolve from or alter the moral obligations of individuals" leaves undefined, for example, the moral responsibility of the stock holders for the labor policy of an industrial corporation or the degree to which it may be expected that the ethics of individual relations should carry over into that realm where it is commonly said that "business is business." Finally, the term "unfair competition" is used as synonymous with bad faith, deception, etc., whereas the effort to determine what is fair competition has been absorbing the attention of legislatures and courts for several decades. Indeed a large part of the work of the Federal Trade Commission has to do with this category.

A second important aspect, in the opinion of Mr. F. E. Johnson of the Department of Research and Education, has to do with proscriptions of the more obvious unethical practices which the record of the Federal Trade Commission and the

admissions of business men themselves show to be very widely carried on. "The Trade Commission records," it declares, "are filled with complaints and orders to 'cease and desist,'" concerning practices which violate in the most thoroughgoing manner the principle laid down by the Chamber concerning the representation of goods and services. Misbranding and misleading advertising are among the most common practices reported to the Commission. The relation of such practices to the Chamber's declaration that the public is entitled to equitable consideration, is obvious.

Some of the practices condemned in "cease and desist" orders are: marking cloth made in this country "English," branding cigars "Tampa" and "Havana" when they are not made in Tampa or from Cuban tobacco; marking hosiery "silk" or "pure silk" when it is part cotton, and "fashioned" when it is not shaped according to the trade understanding of "fashioned"; using the term "process engraving" for a product which resembles engraving but is not made from engraved plates; simulating the signs, lettering and store fronts of a competitive chain store so that the public might think the store one of the competitor's stores, etc. Other stores selling furniture, hosiery or clothing, are ordered to "cease and desist" representing that they sell their goods "direct from factory to you," when they do not manufacture their goods nor act as the direct representative of any factory, and when the purchaser pays as much as retail stores charge for articles of the same quality. Oil companies are ordered to stop advertising that they own oil fields or proven leases to such fields, and that oil is being produced and dividends paid, when such is not the case.

Rotary has likewise added its influence to the movement for higher business standards, although its code, if subjected to the same sort of critical analysis as Mr. Johnson has given to the National Chamber, would fare no better. It represents an aspiration, and to that extent it may be regarded as helpful and highly significant. As J. R. Perkins, who was Chairman of the Committee that drafted the code, said, "'Very good,' says some one from the depths of cynicism, 'but the code of ethics as a preachment is one thing; as a practice it is something else.'" This is but another way of saying that Rotarians are

falling down before an ethical idea and worshipping it, but that they are failing to assimilate it. If this charge is true then Rotary is already looking over its shoulder instead of along an unwalked road, and it is bound to fall into the pit. If Rotarians do not practice the principles of the code of ethics, then the international organization is powerless to evolve any plan to make them do so. It can never be done by writing a new code of "thou shalt" and "thou shalt not"; it can never be done by any one interpreting the code for all other men. Rotarians must choose between embalming their code and the making of it a living thing in society. If they embalm it, then it must share the fate of all mummified things—something to be dug up in the future, like the unlive code of the Babylonian king, and exhibited as a curiosity or a conceit. And if a Rotarian is to be nothing more than a stereotype, he will have to be placed where all plate-matter belong—on the back page. Three paragraphs in the code of ethics are as dangerous as the Sermon on the Mount. The remainder of the code may admit of a sort of clan morality and of group interests, but these paragraphs lay the axe at the root of the tree. If Rotarians can not stand the gaff, then the code should be toned down to a sort of trade-precept document to the neglect of the weightier matters of the law. The hopeful thing is that men around the world have come to understand that society can not endure with a business morality anything less, so the code of ethics hangs on the walls of thirty-five nations.

That Rotarians, so large a majority of whom are business men, should feel the need of a code may be cited as evidence of that necessity. They are as unlikely as the National Chamber to indulge in indictments, but they seem to be ready to urge, and perhaps in some instances, to apply a much needed remedy to the sore spots.

Further evidence of the signs of unrest about present conditions is to be found in a volume by Edgar L. Heermance of New Haven, which he calls *Codes of Ethics*, and which is a part of an elaborate study which he is making of Social Ethics. It shows the extent and variety of the effort to establish sound business and professional standards. Lists of titles are not often illuminating but I believe an exception can effectively be

made in this case to illustrate how far spread is the effort of business men to come to some common understanding as to their business practices. Here are some of the businesses that have adopted codes: accounting, advertising, automobiles, baking, banking, barrels, baskets, books, bottling, boxes, brick, building construction, canning, cement, clothing manufacture and retail, coal, cold storage, commission merchandizing, confectionary, electrical supplies, electro-typing, engraving, foundries, furniture, garment trade, grain, groceries, hardware, hats, hotels, insurance, jewelry, knit goods, leather, lumber manufacture, monuments, motion pictures, musical instruments, paint and varnish, paper, peanut butter, petroleum, plumbing supplies, printing, real estate, restaurants, school supplies, seeds, shoes, tailoring.

This is a formidable, but really encouraging array. It cannot be said that the codes are uniformly well worked out or represent an uniformly high standard. Some are little more than the embodiment of the time honored principle that honesty is the better policy. Others represent an aspiration toward a high degree of true social service. Some are a curious combination of the two ideas. Some are real codes. Some are little more than trade customs. Some are platitudinous. Some are expressed in terms of trade contracts. Some touch fundamentals, others only surface conditions.

It is true that *The Independent* was disposed to make fun of some of the codes and I must confess to a similar feeling. At the same time I believe Mr. Heermance is right when he retorts that the movement is a genuine one. Many of the codes that he quotes are little more than aspirations, and rather timid ones at that, but such are better than none at all.

To return to our main thesis, "Business and Politics: Which is the more ethical?"

Lord Bryce and his successors have made the shortcomings of our cities a familiar story. Novelists, publicists and historians are busily engaged in telling the short comings of business, big and little. In time we may have the definite data to enable us to render a final verdict. In the meantime many of us who have devoted their lifetime to public affairs, appreciating how few cities have had to apply for receiverships; how few

of our cities have fallen into a condition like that of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway; how few are the public embezzlements as compared with those in private business, are disposed to agree with Professor Henry C. Adams when he said: "The truth is that the ideal of public morality entertained by the American people is infinitely purer and higher than the ideal of morality which controls the business man."

Two Dangers Threatening the Federal Reserve System

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I

THE REMOTE AND THE IMMEDIATE DANGERS

Contrary to popular belief the position of the Federal Reserve System is not yet entirely secure. Since its organization in 1914 continual attack, both destructive and constructive, has been made upon it. Perhaps during the World War the system was praised most when it was made the tool of the Treasury Department in the flotation of government bonds. It was blamed for the evil consequences that came as a result of the Treasury policy of "borrow and buy." The enemies of the system accused it of being the cause of post-bellum high prices and also of lower prices during the period of deflation in 1920-1921.

Today the greatest dangers to the system are of a still more subtle nature than the fallacious criticisms of persons interested more in its destruction than in its improvement. The fundamental defect has been inherent since its organization. It is composed of state and national banks. The former are voluntary and the latter are compulsory members. The foremost purpose of the act creating the system was to introduce reforms into our banking structure. State banks have the privilege of withdrawing from membership at will if the reforms, designed to promote the welfare of all the banks and the banking public, do not harmonize with their particular interests. The banks of this class can prevent the reforms and probably endanger the life of the system itself by withdrawing from membership.

✓ The immediate danger to the system is loss of membership. It must have a large membership in order that it may secure sufficient capital and reserves to constitute an effective instrument in the districts. It must be strong enough to give aid to members by rediscounting eligible commercial paper, by enter-

ing the open market, and by extending direct loans. Further, it must have a large number of member banks through whose agencies it may control the money market and prevent inflation.

The par clearance controversy assumed importance because state banks could carry on commercial banking. They refused to join the system partly because they wished to continue making exchange charges. National banks in the country districts threatened to take out state charters and leave the system rather than submit to par clearance. Par clearance had to include all commercial banks in order to succeed. Otherwise the clearing would be partial and inefficient. Coercive methods, such as the presentation for redemption across the counter of large amounts of checks and drafts, were used to compel the state banks to clear at par through the mail.

The outbreak of the war temporarily, at least, eliminated the trouble that the par clearance question had raised. Since credit conditions were not at all strained just preceding the outbreak of the war, the state banks felt little compulsion to enter the system in order to make use of the rediscount privilege. State banks took a different attitude after war was declared. They desired to become members. They feared to be left without support in the uncertainties of war and the possibilities of a money strain. Further, the Treasury wished to have all banks of the country in the system as a means of better financing the war. As a result the requirements for state bank membership were relaxed. The Federal Reserve Act was amended on June 21, 1917, granting two concessions.¹ The first fully guaranteed to the state banks the privilege of leaving the system when the war was over. Previously this right had been only a ruling of the Federal Reserve Board, and it was feared that with a changing personnel banks would not be allowed to withdraw except by liquidation. The second permitted a state bank to enjoy all the powers that the state charter conferred on it, as well as all the services that the system could offer.

The effect on membership was instantaneous. From the time of organization in 1913-1914 until June, 1917, only 53

¹ Section 9 of the amended act.

state banks, having resources of \$825,000,000, had joined. By January, 1918, 296 state banks with resources of \$5,000,000,000 had joined;² and by June, 1924, 1,544 state banks with resources of \$14,618,000,000.³ State member banks contribute to the system more than half as much capital as do national banks.

The problem until the declaration of the war was to get a large enough membership in the system to make it a success. The problem after the war was to prevent the withdrawal of the voluntary members and to dissuade national banks from taking out state charters. The bank charters given by some states are more liberal than the national charters. The state banks seemed determined to exercise all the powers conferred upon them by their charters. If the Federal Reserve Board attempts to limit their powers, the state banks have the privilege of withdrawing from membership. On the other hand, if the Board, in order to keep a large membership in the system, reluctantly consents to the exercise of a power deemed unsound in banking theory, the national banks, thus handicapped in competition with the state banks enjoying more liberal charters, will tend to give up their national and take out state charters. State banks have enjoyed more liberal powers in making loans on real estate, in the absence of restrictions on the amount of loans to an individual or company, in the exercise of trusts, in carrying on a savings bank business, and, finally, at the present time, in branch banking.

The national banks are feeling the competition with state banks most keenly in regard to branch banking. The laws of seventeen states allow state banks and trust companies to establish branches with the approval of the state banking authorities.⁴ The power of national banks to establish branches is neither given nor withheld by the terms of the national bank act. The only section dealing with branch banking is section 5190 of the Revised Statutes:

"The usual business of each National banking association shall be transacted at one office or banking house located in the place specified in its organization charter."

² "The Development of Federal Reserve Policy," by H. L. Reed, p. 67.

³ *Federal Reserve Bulletin*, March, 1925, p. 219.

⁴ *Federal Reserve Bulletin*, December, 1924, p. 930.

The interpretation of this section has been that national banks were forbidden to establish branches.⁵

There are theoretical reasons why the independent national banks fear the competition of the state branch banks. The economies of the branch system enable it to underbid the independent bank in the rate of discount. Further, the branch bank can use coercive means to compel the independent bank to sell out or discontinue business. The branch can be run at a loss until the independent bank is forced into liquidation. It may buy up a large amount of the local bank's liabilities and present them all at once for redemption. This action may force the independent bank into insolvency. The local bank may be bought and absorbed in the branch institution.

The first attempt to eliminate the danger that the national banks faced in competition with the state banks was to limit the extension of branches of state member banks. A resolution of the Federal Reserve Board of November 7, 1923, was intended to put state branch banking under the control of the Board.⁶ State banks applying for membership had to agree to relinquish branches outside the city in which the parent bank was located. Permission of the Board was required even to establish branches within the city of the parent bank. State banks which were engaged in state-wide branch banking, as, for example, some of the large banks of California, immediately protested against this resolution. They maintained that this was a restriction of their charter powers and was contrary to the legislation passed by Congress in 1917. Although the ruling gave the Board much leeway in permitting state banks to establish branches, those banks, desirous of finding out whether or not the Board would use the full extent of its power in prohibiting the establishment of branches, demanded that the Board be more specific in defining its policy. Therefore, on April 7, 1924, an amendment was made to the resolution of November 7, 1923.⁷ The Board would "as a general principle restrict the establishment of branches—to the city of location of the parent bank and the territorial area within the

⁵ *Ibid.*, April, 1924, p. 286.

⁶ *Ibid.*, November, 1923, pp. 928-929.

⁷ *Federal Reserve Bulletin*, for December, 1924, p. 929.

state contiguous thereto—excepting in instances where the state banking authorities have certified, and the Board find that public necessity and advantage render a departure from the principle necessary or desirable." The effect of this amendment is to take out whatever teeth there were in the resolution of November 7, 1923. The real significance of this amendment is to put the control of the establishment of branches in the hands of the state authorities, where it was in the first place.

National banks, in order to exist in competition with state branch banks, have tried to get control of branches without giving up their national charters. This can be done in two ways. When a state bank is converted into a national bank or consolidates with a national bank after taking out a national charter, it can elect to retain its branches under the provisions of the national bank act. The stockholders of a national bank may organize a state bank with branches under state law. This bank may then be converted into a national bank and be consolidated with the national bank mentioned in the first instance. A second method is similar. A state bank already organized with branches may be induced to take out a national charter and consolidate with a national bank. As the law now stands, a state bank cannot consolidate directly with a national bank, but must first take out a national charter.

The difficulties of establishing a state bank with branches are too great to make this method feasible. The second method is practically impossible, for a great deal of persuasion must be used by the national bank to induce a state bank to take out a national charter for consolidating. Its use presupposes that the national bank has control over the policy of the state bank. Otherwise the state bank would be reluctant to give up the liberal powers of its charter for the purpose of pleasing a national bank against which it had been competing at an advantage.

The easiest and most important method used by national banks to establish branches is to surrender their national charters and take out state charters. From January 1, 1918, to April, 1924, 173 national banks with a combined capitalization of \$2,000,000,000 or 10 per cent of the total capitalization of all

national banks have taken out state charters.⁸ The states in which the conversions have taken place are also significant. The largest number was 47 in the state of California, where state-wide branch banking is authorized. Other states, permitting city branch banking, have lost accordingly: New York, 24; Ohio, 19; and Pennsylvania, 15⁹

The significance of this tendency is not that the national banks are lost from membership in the Federal Reserve System. The conversion means that they become "voluntary" instead of compulsory members. They are free to enter and leave the system in whatever way they see their best interests promoted. From 1918 to March, 1925, 101 state banks availed themselves of the opportunity of withdrawal by giving to the Federal Reserve Board the required advance notice of their intention.¹⁰ The real significance of the conversion of national banks into state banks is that the Federal Reserve System loses its power to enforce effectively its policies over its members. The moment that the policies of the system do not harmonize with the individual interests of each voluntary member, the bank can withdraw from membership. The system cannot adopt a firm course of its own in the enforcement of sound banking principles without running the danger of losing the voluntary members and of the conversion of national banks into state banks. If it enforces banking principles that are for public welfare, but which require some sacrifice upon the part of the bank, the latter, if a state bank, can withdraw. If the system rigidly holds to its reforms, it faces the immediate danger of loss of membership. The state member banks contribute about \$14,000,000,000 of resources to the Federal Reserve System. Non-member banks, eligible for membership, possess nearly an equal amount.¹¹ The Federal Reserve officials dare not lose the membership of the state banks because, in that case, most of the banking resources of the country would be outside the system. On the other hand, if the officials make sacrifices to please the individual banks and to prevent loss of membership, they face

⁸ *Hearings on the McFadden Bill*, H. R. 8887, 68th Congress, 1st session. April 9, 15, 16, and 18, 1924, p. 10. Statement by Comptroller H. M. Dawes.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Federal Reserve Bulletin*, March, 1925, p. 220.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

the remote danger of unsound banking. The officials find themselves forced to make concessions to the state banks which their better judgment tells them not to make from the point of view of banking theory. The national banks in order to compete with the state banks on an equal basis also demand the privileges of the concessions granted to state banks. The possibility of taking out a state charter enables a national bank to make its appeal effective. Both dangers work towards a common end: the defeat of the purpose of the Federal Reserve System. Both dangers are caused by the fact that two classes of banks, state and national, voluntary and compulsory, are members of the system.

The attitude of Congress, of the public, and of the officials of the Federal Reserve System is to avoid the immediate danger by equalization of the powers of state and national banks. The national government exercises no power over the state banks. Therefore, if equalization of powers is to be made, the national government must legislate so as to give the powers, enjoyed by the state banks, to the national banks. This means that every time a state legislature passes a law giving banks in that state more liberal powers, agitation will be made to give national banks that power in order to permit them to compete on a plane of equality with state banks. Instead of control of commercial banking by the Federal Reserve System, we shall have indirect control of banking by the states. We have twice experienced the evils of state banking.¹² That experience should have taught us that it is about the worst thing which could happen to our banking structure. Equalization of powers of state and national banks, if it does avoid the immediate, will not avoid the remote danger to the system.

II

BRANCH BANKING

New legislation, designed to avoid the immediate danger of loss of membership, should not be permitted if, at the same time, it involves the remote danger of undermining the banking structure. There would be no sacrifice in reforms and ideals if branch banking were sound in theory and practice. Would

¹² The first period was from 1811 to 1816; the second, from 1836 to 1864.

branch banking be beneficial or would it be harmful to the system? If it were beneficial, we should have it irrespective of the equalization of powers of state and national banks; if it were harmful, we should not have it at all.

The advantages of branch banking can be grouped under three heads. It has economies, safety, and convenience.

The branch institution is more economical than the independent bank for two reasons. Its overhead expenses are lower than those of the independent bank. The branches are operated by employed agents who, being under the control of the experienced and well trained management of the parent bank, need not be as highly paid as the management of the independent bank. Further, since the building and equipment of the independent bank reflect its prestige, it must have the best and most imposing that is possible. The magnificence of the parent bank, however, makes it less imperative that the branches be as imposing and as fully equipped as are independent banks. The humble quarters of the branch may rest secure in public confidence, for that lies in the prestige of the large parent bank. Finally, the branch system is economical in overhead expense because it has a common accounting system for all the branches. In the second place, the branch bank can economize the use of funds and reserves. Probably this is the greatest economy of the branch institution. If the branches are scattered among communities that have diversified industries, the seasonal demand for funds is not likely to occur simultaneously in them all. Therefore, funds can be shifted where and when needed. The branch bank must keep less reserves in proportion to liabilities than the independent bank. Loans can be made by the branch bank at lower rates of interest if competition requires it; and, in the absence of competition, if the profits of the bank would be increased thereby.

The branch institution has greater safety than the independent bank, not so much because of its large capitalization as for two other reasons. Funds can be shifted from one branch to another according to necessity. Funds can be mustered at the point in the chain of banks where there is the greatest danger. Also, the branch bank has an opportunity for greater distribution of risks than does the independent bank. If the

branches are spread out among communities having diversified industries, there is the likelihood that losses in one community will be offset by gains in another. Especially is this true of rural communities where banks are often required to carry "frozen assets," sometimes for two or three years.

The branch institution has greater convenience for customers than does the independent bank. This advantage is made possible primarily because of economies and safety. Banking facilities can be extended to small rural communities that could not support an independent bank. The banking business in the small community may be run in conjunction with the post office or country store. The large capitalization of the branch institution puts practically no limit on the amount of a single loan to one individual or company as is the case with the independent national bank. The same principle applies to the city suburbs. Branch banks can be located there for the convenience of customers. Today large factories are being built outside the city. It is very inconvenient for the managers of these factories to go to the center of the city where traffic is congested to do their banking business. Then, too, it is inconvenient for the commuter who lives in the suburbs.

There are also three disadvantages to branch banking. First, there is the danger of monopoly; second, the loss of the judgment and initiative of the independent banker; and, finally, the probability of unethical practices of competition during the transition period from independent to branch banks.

The greatest disadvantage is the danger of monopoly. There are theoretical reasons why branch banking tends toward monopoly. The branch bank can underbid the independent bank in the rate of discount because of economies. Furthermore, the branch bank may employ coercive means, such as local price cutting, to force the independent bank into liquidation or absorption in the branch bank system. The banking experience of the world is proof of this tendency of branch banking toward consolidation and centralization. The Canadian system is an example,¹⁸ as the following table shows:

¹⁸ *Hearings on the McFadden Bill*, pp. 12-13.

YEAR	NO. BANKS
1885.....	41
1905.....	35
1925.....	11 and (3,965 branches) ²⁴

The Canadian banks have a sort of silent agreement among themselves in respect to discount charges and payment of interest on deposits.¹⁵ This agreement is effective. Rarely does a bank discount for less than six per cent or pay over three per cent on both time and demand deposits. There is unfairness in this latter agreement. Savings deposits should bear a higher rate of interest than demand deposits. The bank cannot afford to pay much more than three per cent for demand deposits because of the uncertainty as to when the customer will call for payment of the deposits. But in the case of savings deposits more can be paid, for the customer has made an investment and is very unlikely to call for his funds immediately. There is competition in the Canadian system over the extension of branches. It is claimed that in spite of the stringent requirements for the extension of branches there is waste and duplication in the system. In Scotland, also, branch banking has brought concentration of control. Nine banks with 1,400 branches furnish banking facilities for the entire country.¹⁶ It is said these banks exert such control over the money market of their country that large manufacturers have to go south of the Clyde in order to cut the high discount rates which the Scotch banks charge.¹⁷ In England, monopoly is prevented by the action of the Bank of England. Although the bank is owned and controlled by individuals, it works for public welfare. The Bank of England has power to enter the open market and compete with the other banks. It can force them to lower as well as to raise their rates of discount. Nevertheless the English banks are highly concentrated in control, and recently amalgamations have been rapid. The following figures show the degree of concentration:¹⁸

²⁴ *Letter of the National City Bank of New York*, for July, 1925, p. 113.

¹⁵ *Readings in Money and Banking*, by C. A. Phillips, pp. 421, 425-426.

¹⁶ *Hearings on the McFadden Bill*, p. 12.

¹⁷ *Readings in Money and Banking*, Phillips, p. 479.

¹⁸ *Hearings on the McFadden Bill*, p. 12.

YEAR	NO. BANKS
1892	429
1922	20

(The "Big Five" controls over 87% of the banking resources of the country).

The present situation in California where state-wide branch banking institutions already possess \$1,500,000,000 out of \$2,500,000,000, the total capitalization of all the banks in the state, lays further emphasis upon the reality of this tendency in our own country.¹⁹ Further proof is given by the development of city branch banking. Cleveland has three national banks and twenty-two state banks with seventy-seven branches; New Orleans, one national bank and eight state banks with thirty-nine branches; Detroit, three national banks and fifteen state banks with 214 branches; and Buffalo, four national banks and twelve state banks with forty branches.²⁰ Monopoly is an evil not only because it may lead to high discount rates, but also because credit may be withheld from certain industries in favor of others. It may lead to monopolistic control of industry.

The danger of monopoly and its evils is more real than is generally admitted. Under the present structure of the Federal Reserve System, it is all the more real. If district-wide branch banking were allowed, one institution or a very few, by concerted action, could control all the banks of the district. Since six of the nine directors of the Federal Reserve Bank are elected by the member banks, it would be possible for one or a very few branch banks of the district to control the policy of the Federal Reserve Bank. Then, on the supposition that this condition were changed, the power of the Federal Reserve Bank would have to be increased. It would have to be made purely a government bank beyond the control and influence of the banks of the district. It would have to be given powers which would allow it to loan directly to individuals and to compete with the banks of the district, as the Bank of England does, to prevent the evils of monopoly. The system would have to be changed to fit branch institutions instead of independent banks.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

²⁰ *Report of Comptroller of the Currency*, December 4, 1922, p. 4.

Next to monopoly, there is one more very strong argument against branch banking. In spite of all that is said to the contrary, the independent banker is a big asset in the community, especially in rural districts. If there should come in the place of this well-informed local banker a sort of chief clerk under the control of the management of the parent bank, the community and the country as a whole would have lost the ability and judgment of independent bankers. Of course the manager of the local branch may be given much discretionary power or the local banker may retain his old position on a salary basis. Further, it is argued that the management of the local branch would be more efficient, for the manager would have competition to keep his job. There is some doubt whether or not this stimulus would offset the self-interest of the local banker. Then, too, the manager would only be making a good record to be shifted later to a better position. By the time that he had become well acquainted with the community he would be ready to go elsewhere. It seems that this judgment of the local banker would be lost in the branch bank system. Character loans, as in Canada and in Scotland, would have to be made on the endorsement of a neighbor.

Finally, if branch banking were allowed, for a time there would result a struggle between the branch and the independent bankers. According to the evidence given in the hearings on the McFadden bill, this struggle is now going on in California. Unethical means would probably be employed in order to secure control. The branch banker, because of greater resources and the ability to absorb losses for the time being, would have powerful means of coercion over the local bankers. Under present conditions, it is doubtful whether or not such a situation should be allowed to exist.

Branch banking is needed less now than formerly, for the Federal Reserve System gives us the biggest advantages of branch banking. Through the rediscount operation, direct loans to member banks, and open market operations, funds can be economized by shifting them from one community to another according to seasonal demand. It has been found possible to decrease the minimum reserve requirements to seven per cent,

ten per cent, and thirteen per cent for country, reserve city, and central reserve city banks respectively. The only economy that branch banking can offer in the Federal Reserve System is a decrease in overhead expenses. The safety of banks in the system is made greater by intercommunity shifting of funds in the time of a crisis. Formerly, there was real need of branch banking in the rural districts of the South and West in order to give the banks opportunity to get distribution of risks. A local bank with small capitalization, catering to one class of clientele engaged in one kind of industry, often found itself forced to the wall because it was unable to carry "frozen assets" in its portfolios. Now special banks have been provided for by act of Congress to take care of this difficulty and others.²¹ It has always been an open question whether or not commercial banking should be extended to agriculture. Today farming is considered a business almost like any other business. The farmer must have fixed capital and working capital. The former is considered an investment, and the latter, half way between an investment and a commercial loan. Production in agriculture requires short time loans for a period not less than six months and sometimes for three years, as in the case of cattle raising. Throughout the world loans to agriculture have been considered something separate from commercial loans. Commercial loans are confined more to distribution of goods than to long processes of production. Rural communities have been served best by "coöperative credit unions." In Germany short term loans are given by the Raiffeisen Bank and investment loans by the *Landschaften Bank*. In this country we have co-operative credit unions for agriculture. They are district-wide in operation and have the necessary opportunity for distribution of risks. The Hollis-Bulkeley bill, passed in 1916, provided for Federal Farm Loan Associations designed to give long term credit to agriculture. In 1923 Federal Intermediate Credit Unions were provided for by act of Congress. When these banks are fully organized they will make a specialty of lending to farmers. Therefore, instead of having commercial banks made safe for agricultural communities by the operation of

²¹ Federal Farm Loan Associations and Federal Intermediate Credit Unions.

branches, it would seem best to let these banks have the field entirely. Independent banks in the cities have opportunity to distribute their risks. The Federal Reserve System and coöperative credit unions have brought economies and made banking safer, so that branch banking is needed less than formerly.

The remaining advantages that branch banking can offer are economies in overhead expenses and the possibility of greater convenience for customers in the extension of branches in the suburbs of large cities and in small rural communities. There seems no reason to believe that the advantages of branch banking in the cities could not be obtained by the establishment of "additional offices" as now authorized by the comptroller of the currency.²² The coöperative credit unions make less urgent the extension of branches in rural communities.

It would seem unwise to run the risk of the development of monopoly in return for such slight advantages. Other alternatives that are less dangerous appear to obtain the advantages. If branch banking were allowed, the structure of the system would have to be changed radically to prevent the evils of monopoly. Radical changes are nearly always politically inexpedient. Further, the initiative and judgment of the independent banker would be lost in a branch bank system. Finally, during the period of transition from independent to branch banks, there would be likely to develop unethical practices of competition. Consideration of both sides of the question is not favorable for permitting branch banking in the Federal Reserve System.

III

ANALYSIS OF THE MCFADDEN BILL

The McFadden bill is designed to bring an up-to-date revision of the national bank act so that national banks will be able to compete with the state banks on an equal plane.²³ Its foremost purpose is to avoid the immediate danger to the Federal Reserve System by legislative equalization of powers of state and national banks. The bill does not attempt to limit

²² H. H. Preston, "Recent Developments in Branch Banking" in *American Economic Review*, September, 1924, pp. 448-499.

²³ For text of the bill see *Federal Reserve Bulletin*, February, 1925, pp. 103-107.

the powers of state banks, but rather to confer on national banks the powers which state banks enjoy. Indirectly the states are dictating the banking laws of the nation. The Federal government, in order to preserve the Federal Reserve System, finds itself compelled to give to national banks powers which it may consider unwise. State banking control in the light of present and past experience is dangerous for the country.

Secondary consideration is given to the remote danger to the system. Congress, the public generally, and the officials of the Federal Reserve System consider branch banking an evil, yet they would permit it in order to avoid an immediate danger. The fact that branch banking, as authorized in the bill, is confined solely to the cities and to those states which permit the practice by their own banks, is presumptive evidence that branch banking is considered unwise. Otherwise, why not permit it generally throughout the country?

It is felt that city branch banking will eliminate the immediate danger to the system. With the exception of California and sections in the South, branch banking is carried on by state banks only in cities in which the parent bank is located. The bill purposes to give national banks permission to establish city branches where state banks enjoy that privilege and to prevent their spreading further. This plan would probably succeed unless the state legislatures should authorize state banks to establish county-wide or state-wide branches. Then more legislation would have to be enacted to equalize the powers of state and national banks if it is hoped to avoid the immediate danger. In that case, the further spread of branch banking would not be prevented, as the framers of the law contemplate. The McFadden bill would not accomplish its foremost purpose in California. There state-wide branch banking is carried on. Section nine of the bill does read that no state bank member can establish branches outside the corporate limits of the city in which the parent bank is located. The California branch bankers insist that they will leave the system rather than give up any of the branch banking powers conferred upon them by their state charters. The loss of membership of the branch banks of California would weaken the influence of the Federal

Reserve Bank to such an extent that it would become an ineffective instrument in the twelfth district. In southern districts there is county-wide branch banking. Very few of these banks are members of the national system at all. The purpose of the bill would not be accomplished here. If the state banks established county-wide branches and competed keenly with the national banks, the tendency of the national bank would be to take out state charters and leave the Federal Reserve System. The bill would be only a partial remedy for the immediate danger to the system.

The main advantages of city branch banking are two: the possibilities of decrease in overhead expenses and convenience for patrons. The limitation of branch banking to the city removes the possibility for banks in rural communities to get distribution of risks. This is the greatest good that could come from branch banking in the Federal Reserve System. The bill allows branch banking where the least good could be done. Further, the greatest danger of all, monopoly, could develop in the city. There would be nothing to prevent the evils of monopoly except the resort of borrowers to the banks of a neighboring city. That would be inconvenient and of no avail if a monopoly had developed as a result of branch banking. The evils of monopoly could only be prevented by the action of the Federal Reserve Bank. This bank would have to be changed so that it could compete with member banks. The country banks, still independent, would object to the competition of the reserve bank. Branch banking in the city would necessitate changes that would work in opposition to the best interests of the country bankers. A situation where half the banks were independent and half were branch banks, would not tend towards harmonious operation. In addition, unethical practices, hard to control because of their subtlety, would be likely to develop until the independent banks were forced into insolvency or were absorbed in the branch system. The advantages of branch banking in the city would be small, while the dangers would be great. It would seem preferable to get the advantages of branch banking without its dangers by the establishment of "additional offices" as now authorized by the Comptroller of the Currency.

Other powers besides branch banking are equalized in the bill. It provides for perpetual charters for national banks, for those banks to carry on a savings bank business, for loans on the security of both agricultural and city real estate, and for the removal of restrictions on the limitations of liabilities of a national bank. Granting that the provisions of this bill would fully equalize the powers of state and national banks at the present time, what guarantee have we that state banks will not be given other privileges in the future, necessitating another revision of the national law? In respect to branch banking there is doubt whether or not the McFadden bill would avoid the immediate danger to the system. It would be almost impossible to harmonize the banking laws of all the states with the national bank act. Constant revision would be necessary. Then, too, there is the remote danger to the system. Powers will need to be equalized every time the state legislatures pass new laws giving the state banks more liberal charters. Experience seems to show that state control of banking, on the whole, is unsound. The Federal government and the Federal Reserve System may be forced to tolerate sacrifices in banking reforms if the two classes of members are kept on equal terms of competition for the preservation of the system. All provisions in the bill are considered doubtful in respect to sound banking theory. The privilege of making loans on city real estate is most objectionable. Speculative loans should not be made. The McFadden bill sets a bad precedent, for, in attempting to avoid the immediate danger to the system, it overlooks the remote danger which may accomplish the same results as the first over a long period of time.

IV

A REMEDY SUGGESTED

The framers and supporters of the McFadden bill consider the preservation of the Federal Reserve System the object of their effort. Loyal support of that idea carries them to the point of sacrificing some of the ideals of the system. Sometimes it is wise from the point of view of practicability to descend from the clouds of idealism. The trouble here is that

the Federal Reserve System has not yet reached the clouds of idealism from which to descend. It is still at the foot of the ladder, slowly trying to rise. The system gives the country many of the advantages of centralization which are made possible by a central bank like the First or Second Bank of the United States. Improvement can be made in the system by getting more of the advantages of centralization within the Federal Reserve district. The powers of the Federal Reserve Bank are not equal to those of a central bank. It is at this point that improvement can be made in the system. The institution is worth saving and improving because of the centralization it already embodies. On account of the long distance that must be traveled to reach perfection, it can ill afford to sacrifice any of its youthful ideals even on the altar of self-preservation, for necessity requires that no sacrifice be made. Equalization of powers of state and national banks by legislation fails to avoid the remote danger to the system. Both the remote and immediate dangers must be eliminated.

All the trouble has been caused, is caused now, and more is likely to be caused in the future, from the fact that commercial banks can operate under state charters. The state banks have the power to dominate the policy of the system. We have twice experienced the evils of state control of banking, and we know that it is the worst thing that could happen to the country in the banking field. Yet, under present conditions, every time a state legislature confers more liberal powers on its banks, the way lies open for the national banks to demand that their charters be made more liberal in order to compete with their rivals, the state institutions.

National necessity once before in our history demanded that state commercial banks be forced to take out national charters. That was in 1866, two years after the passage of the national bank act. Very few state banks took out national charters before the law of 1866 was passed. There were two main reasons why all commercial banks were forced to take out national charters at that time. The immediate reason probably had the most influence: the support and preservation of the credit of the United States. The second was supplementary: the estab-

lishment of sound commercial banking throughout the country. Nevertheless the latter argument was strongly urged, for the evils of state banking before the Civil War had convinced most thinkers of the day that banking must be made sound for the entire country under Federal control. The immediate necessity of improving the government credit by finding a market for government bonds was enough to pass the national bank act of 1864. The act of 1866 had to be passed to enforce the purpose of the former law. Commercial banks were compelled to take out national charters. The act of 1866 taxed state bank note issues at ten per cent. Since commercial loans were made chiefly in the form of notes at that time, state banks could not make loans by note issues except by the payment of a prohibitive tax of ten per cent. State banks had to take out national charters if they desired to continue in the commercial banking business.

The present embarrassments of the system would not exist if a new method of making commercial loans had not developed. Loans in the form of deposits constitute the bulk of a commercial bank's liabilities today. State banks have found themselves at no disadvantage with national banks in making commercial loans by the creation of deposits. The first purpose of the law has been fulfilled,—the provision for a market for government bonds. It seems a perversion of justice in the light of sound banking theory that the evil part of the law, the creation of a bond-secured currency, succeeded and that the good part of the law of 1864, the establishment of sound commercial banking for the entire country, failed. State banks today, including both member and non-member banks, have sixty per cent of the banking resources of the country.

Checks today have taken the place of notes of the past. Why should not the checks of state banks be taxed ten per cent, the same as notes in 1866? The purpose now is not only to get uniform sound commercial banking, but also to eliminate the immediate and remote dangers to the Federal Reserve System and give it an opportunity to enforce its reforms. Commercial banking has been proved an interstate matter in all its aspects. The currency must be uniform throughout the United States,

not only in appearance but in purchasing power; the clearing system must be country-wide; the reserves must be centralized; and finally, the Federal government must have fiscal agents of its own creation to handle its funds. The system has brought these reforms. It would be folly to hinder the system in the performance of its functions by permitting the immediate and remote dangers to continue in existence.

Would Congress have the power to pass a law taxing checks of state banks ten per cent? It had the power to tax notes ten per cent, and why should it not have the power to tax checks which are also currency? Checks must be uniform throughout the United States in order to be employed to the best advantage. The decisions of the Supreme Court have upheld the constitutionality of the power of Congress to establish a uniform currency for the country. It was so held in the case of *Veazie Bank vs. Fenno*²⁴ that "a tax on the circulation of state banks is not repugnant to the Constitution . . . on the ground . . . that the act impairs franchises granted by the state" and that

"Congress having undertaken—to provide a uniform currency for the whole country, may secure the benefit of it to the people by appropriate legislation, and to that end may restrain by suitable enactments the circulation of any notes not issued under its own authority."

Further confirmation of the constitutionality of the tax is given in the decision of the case of *Merchant's National Bank of Little Rock vs. the United States*.²⁵

"The provision (taxing note issues of State banks 10%) . . . is constitutional even where its effect is to tax an instrument of the State."

From the economic point of view there is no difference between loans made in the form of note issues and loans made by the creation of deposits. Checks, as note issues, are a part of the currency of the United States. Checks form the greater part of the currency today, and there seems no reason why Congress would not have power to make checks uniform throughout the country. It is only through the clearing system of the Federal Reserve banks that payment by check can be made effectively

²⁴ See *Digest of National Bank Decisions*, compiled under the direction of the Comptroller of the Currency in 1908.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

anywhere in the United States. By compelling all commercial banks to enter the system, it would be possible to make payments by check anywhere in the United States.

The Constitution gives Congress power specifically "to coin money, (and) regulate the value thereof." Every time a state bank makes a loan it affects the value of money. Unless there are more goods and more transactions with each increase of bank credit, there is a rise in prices and a fall in the value of money from the long time point of view. Further, the state banks use the Federal Reserve notes as reserve on which to give credit. The notes themselves represent loans. Yet the state banks make more loans on loans already given by the Federal Reserve banks to their members. Member banks are prohibited from pursuing this practice. Such lending and pyramiding of credit tend to lead to inflation as well as to unsound banking. Thus the control of the value of money lies outside the power of Congress or the banking institutions to which it has entrusted this power. Using the authority given it by the Constitution, Congress, in the second place, could tax the checks of state banks to insure its control over the value of money.

Would any hardship be caused the state banks in taking out national charters? There would be no more hardship to the state banks than the assumption of the responsibilities which the national banks have to bear. Both would, then, be on an equal plane of competition, and the unfairness that exists in the system at the present time would be removed. Both the representatives of the banks of the states of New York and California praised the Federal Reserve System in the hearings on the McFadden bill. It is their duty to help maintain the system for their own welfare and that of the country. No hardship would be caused the state banks except that they would have to compete with national banks on a plane of equality. No competition is competition unless all contestants have equal opportunities. The state banks could not demand in fairness to all concerned that the national banks should be forced to bear all the burdens of an institution designed to promote the public welfare, the advantages of which they themselves are directly and indirectly reaping.

Alfred Tennyson: A Victorian Romance

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I

The Victorian age, whose idols for a generation or more have suffered so grievously at the hands of the iconoclasts, is finding again its champions and defenders. That great epoch, condemned these many years to outer darkness, is emerging from the shadow, and here and there a distinguished voice re-enforces its appeal from the adverse judgment so long borne.

Our concern, however, in this paper, is not with the Victorian period as a whole but merely with one of its heroes. Partly, perhaps, a reaction from an excess of popularity, Tennyson's lapse into obscurity is an incident in the eclipse of his age. For a third of a century his name has been almost lost to literature, and his life, though a story of surpassing interest, is less familiar than that of any literary figure of modern times whose fame filled anything like so large a place.

The chief value of Tennyson's life for our generation is the tonic it carries for those who falter in the quest for artistic excellence, and who are tempted to hasten success by the sacrifice of high standards. Such will find a spur and stimulus in the poet's life-long devotion to an exalted ideal. Indeed, Tennyson's worship of perfection, his stoic fidelity to lofty aims against appalling discouragements, his long and tragic struggle for recognition, might have served as the framework of a fascinating novel. Nor would the softer touch have been absent. The story of his long-cherished love, crowned at length, after many vicissitudes, by happy marriage, is one of the tenderest chapters in modern biography.

In the elaborate *Memoir* by Tennyson's son we are told that the poet "wished the incidents of his life to be given as shortly as might be without comment," and those who believe in the ennobling influence upon mankind of beautiful and simple romance must regret that the world has been left to gather together as it may the details of Tennyson's courtship and mar-

riage. "The one love-affair," says Elizabeth L. Cary in her interesting volume upon Tennyson, "is the enduring passion for his wife, but though the period of long waiting offered a capital chance for fine writing, it is disposed of in the fewest possible words."

II

Toward the sea-ward side of Lincolnshire, not far from the coast against which the breakers of the North Sea crash, there lies—in a triangle spreading from Louth on the North to past Spilsby and Horncastle on the South—a pastoral country which was peopled by colonies of Danes in the old days and over which time passed lightly to beyond the first quarter of the nineteenth century, working little change in the thought and feeling and language of the inhabitants and as little in the scenic aspects of the region. The native speech of this area—of which the dialect poems of Tennyson are a memory—is said to have kept its purity until the middle of the century. Within this triangle, full of quaint and quiet hamlets, was the village of Somersby, where Tennyson was born and where the old church of which the father of the poet was rector still stands. Some seven miles to the westward, at the foot of a low range of hills—known among the Lincolnshire folk as "wolds"—lay the market-town of Horncastle, where Emily Sellwood lived with her father and sisters.

It appears there was an acquaintance between the elder Tennyson and the head of the Sellwood household, and on an inviting day in the spring of 1830 the Sellwoods had driven to Somersby to call at the rectory, bringing with them the eldest daughter, then a girl of seventeen. Staying with the Tennysons at the time was Arthur Hallam, a friend of Alfred, and already perhaps the accepted suitor of Emily Tennyson, the youngest daughter of the family. During the afternoon Hallam suggested to Miss Sellwood that they walk about the rectory grounds. There was much in the scenery to interest a visitor—the beautiful gardens, the "cold rivulet" nearby, the stately woods and "long alleys falling down to twilight grots." In the glen, at a turn of the way, they came upon Alfred musing among the scenes his poetry was to immortalize. At the sight

of the slender girl, he stopped, half startled. The vision seemed one out of his own poetic mood. "Are you a Dryad," he asked, "or an Oread wandering here"?

The Laureate-to-be was now laying the foundations of his fame. His father died in 1831, and the living at Somersby passed to another, but the use of the rectory was permitted until 1837 to the Tennyson family, and there the poet remained, slowly perfecting his art and working out that rare mastery over the resources of simple English which made his verse the marvel of nineteenth century literature. At the same time, however, what seemed an evil fate was silently fashioning its bolts of bitterness and suffering.

Tennyson was one of the most sensitive of men, but it is precisely to such natures we look for a devotion like the devotion of Tennyson to Hallam. Nor was the devotion undeserved. With a fore-vision marvellously prophetic Tennyson's friend had seen what no eye else seemed to perceive. As early as 1829, when no one of the three was yet beyond his twentieth year, Hallam wrote to Gladstone, "I consider Tennyson as promising fair to be the greatest poet of our generation, perhaps of our century"; and to the poet's sister he wrote, speaking of Somersby, "Many years, or shall I say many ages, after we have all been laid in the dust, young lovers of the beautiful and the true may seek in faithful pilgrimage the spot where Alfred's mind was molded in sympathy with the ever-lasting forms of nature."

It was largely through the influence of Hallam that Tennyson ventured to give to the world in 1830 his slender volume, *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*, containing, among others, "Recollections of Arabian Nights," of which it has been said by Morton Luce, "Perhaps there is no more striking achievement of musical word-painting in the language." It goes without saying that these poems can not rank with the later work of Tennyson's pen. None the less, to the eye of the modern student they mark poetic talents of a high order, and in our times, we doubt not, the volume would have met, if not a flattering reception, at least a kindly one. The conditions of literary success in that day, however, differed widely from those which now prevail.

The critics of that generation wielded a power which they no longer possess. The London and Edinburgh reviews were the high courts before which all seekers for literary distinction were compelled to come and from whose sentence there was no appeal save to the slow judgment of time. It was before these courts that Tennyson now appeared, not without faith that some word of praise would be vouchsafed him from the seats of authority. We may realize something of his chagrin when Christopher North, in *Blackwood's*, stamped upon his little volume of lyrics the verdict, "Drivel, and more dismal drivel, and even more dismal drivel."

A far less sensitive spirit than Tennyson's might have been mortified by this coarse jeer. In the poet's case, however, the feeling was more cruel than mortification. He would have suffered less keenly had the act been a rapier-thrust instead of a sneer. None the less, with Hallam's encouragement, he concluded to try once more, and, in 1832, the second volume appeared. Upon these poems he had labored with all the care of a lapidary upon a precious stone, and among them were many which are now endurably linked with Tennyson's fame,—"The Miller's Daughter," "Lady of Shallott," "Palace of Art," "The Lotos-Eaters," "A Dream of Fair Women," and others now treasured among the choicest offerings of the poet's genius; and it is apparent that both Tennyson and Hallam looked for a reception from the reviews far different from that which the earlier volume had met. What really happened was so terrible, so unexpected, so unjust, that it drove the poet into an unbroken silence of ten years. In the *London Quarterly* for July, 1833,—a periodical of which an old Lincolnshire squire had said to Tennyson that it was "the next book to God's Bible,"—appeared a review of the volume from the pen of Lockhart which consigned the whole performance to the abyss.

But the end was not yet. Fate had still another and a far ruder bolt to hurl. The trials, as of Job, to which the poet seemed foredoomed, needed for their completeness the crowning blow which was now to strike. On September 15, 1833, with no premonitory sign to serve as warning, Arthur Hallam died.

Had the Furies sought revenge upon the household at Somersby for some ancient wrong of their Danish or Norman forefathers, no fitter moment or more terrible weapon could have been chosen. Loved passionately by the sister whom he was shortly to have wedded, loved no less deeply by the brother to whom the departed soul was knit more strongly than by ties of blood, the death of Hallam wrought the utmost desolation in the Tennyson home. Emily Tennyson fell into a dangerous illness from which she was brought back to health only after many months. The poet, for his part, was completely broken in spirit. The sense of the emptiness of life which had always been with him now took the form of a longing for death, which only the feeling of duty toward the stricken sister could drive wholly from his mind.

The next few years for Tennyson were unproductive ones. Joy in life for him there was none, and the future held little hope. "Tennyson was so far persuaded that the English people would never care for his poems," we are told in the *Memoir*, "that had it not been for the intervention of friends he declared it not unlikely that after the death of Hallam he would not have continued to write." What he did write took its tone and color from the loss he had suffered. Such were "The Two Voices," and such was that melancholy lyric, now so familiar to all the world,

'Break, break, break,
On thy cold, gray stones, O Sea'

a wailing lament for his dead Arthur, as mournful as it is beautiful.

III

There is something satisfying in the reflection that in these dark days, when the future Laureate had lost all love of life and was about to give up forever the great mission which destiny meant he should fulfill, the saving influence was the gentle-spirited girl at Horncastle, who had now grown to womanhood, but of whom the poet had seen little since their romantic first meeting in the woodland at Somersby.

Charles, the favorite brother of Tennyson, and Louisa, the youngest of the Sellwood girls, had been friends for several

years, and now it came to be known that a marriage had been agreed upon to take place in the early future. This new interest between the families gave occasion for the renewal of Alfred's acquaintance with the elder sister. When, in 1836, the wedding took place, Emily Sellwood was one of the bridesmaids, and the poet was selected as her escort into the church. Even before this the quiet strength and sweetness of her nature had made a deep impression upon Tennyson but now, in this hour so happy for those dear to them both, all the beauty and goodness of her character seemed shining in her moistened eyes. It is hardly matter for marvel that before the ceremony was ended which united the sister of the one and the brother of the other, the gentle bridesmaid and her manly companion had realized a precious significance for themselves in the same sacred service. It was in memory of this occasion that the poet wrote the little sonnet, "The Bridesmaid," which appears among his writings, though the poem was not published until many years after his own marriage.

Tennyson was now twenty-seven years of age, and Emily Sellwood was twenty-three. Like a stream of sunlight her love had rushed into the dark void which the death of Hallam had left, dissolving the shadows and bringing to him new hope and fresh purpose. Thus began the purest of attachments, nourished by letters and occasional visits until 1840, and crowned at last, ten years later, after sore trial and suffering for both, in the simple marriage at Shipplake church.

The year 1836, which saw the marriage of Charles Tennyson and Louisa Sellwood, would have seen also the marriage of Alfred and Emily but for one obstacle. That obstacle was Tennyson's poverty. Several years had elapsed since the volume of 1832 had made its appearance, and here and there in England a lone voice had been raised in praise of his verse. The literary public, however, for the most part, knew little of the poet and cared less, and, without any vocation save that which his pen afforded, Tennyson felt acutely "the eternal want of pence that vexes public men."

But the great singer of the years to be was far from idle. Growing under his hand were the sublime elegies upon the

death of Hallam, and in the intervals of their composition he was re-writing his earlier poems, with an eye to the defects which had called forth the abuse of "fusty Christopher" and the ridicule of Lockhart. Revolving in his mind, too, at this time, was the project of a great epic to be founded upon the Arthurian myths, and a beginning was made; and to this period, also, belongs that exquisite idyl, *Dora*, fit to stand with the Book of Ruth in its simple beauty.

Tennyson's thought had now taken on a breadth and soberness wanting to the airy poems of his youth, and his skill, ripened by patient effort, was showing itself in a style which, if less ornate than before, was equally musical and far more clear and telling. Severe critic of his own writings though he was, Tennyson felt that his next volume should place his fame beyond the cavil of reviewers, and himself perhaps, incidentally, beyond want. This volume appeared in 1842, and it is not improbable that its publication was hastened by a circumstance upon which we must pause to dwell briefly,—a circumstance which gave a rude shock to the dearest hopes of the poet and brought back for a time all the gloom of former years.

IV

In 1840 the engagement between Tennyson and Emily Sellwood was, at the command of the latter's family, formally brought to an end, and further correspondence between them was forbidden. The cause, of course, was Tennyson's continuous poverty. That the breaking of the engagement was no wish of the lady herself may be taken as certain, and from this angle of time we can only view the incident as a forced sacrifice to worldly prudence of womanly trust and fidelity. Of the poet's own emotions there is what might seem an ample record in *Locksley Hall*, written at this period. We are not unaware of Tennyson's disclaimer that these stanzas are biographical, and we are quite prepared to take him at his word. That the poem, however, took its tone and color from what seemed a great loss in his life the poet has not denied, and the personal note seems unmistakable in the passionate bitterness of its lines.

Locksley Hall, with its fine Saxon, took instant hold upon the reading public, and was the first of Tennyson's poems,

indeed, to attain anything like popularity. The entire volume of 1842, however, made a powerful impression, and in the highest quarters was conceded to be an enduring contribution to English literature. Carlyle, as yet a stranger to the poet, penned a letter full of enthusiastic admiration, and not long afterward Wordsworth, with a fine modesty, pronounced the new singer "decidedly the first of our living poets."

Tennyson's place in literature, therefore, was no longer matter for question, and in so far as the volume of 1842 had been intended as a crowning appeal for recognition, the poet's anticipations were more than fulfilled. Such, however, was far from true as regards the financial results of the publication. The poems, notwithstanding the reception they had met, wrought no material improvement in his fortunes, and the hope Tennyson had entertained of renewing his suit under auspices which would reassure the family at Horncastle soon vanished into thin air. Through his sister, however, Carlyle's letter in praise of the last book of poems had been sent to Miss Sellwood, and we may well believe that the applause of the great essayist and historian filled that tender and loyal heart with even a larger measure of faith and hope than she had felt before.

V

Pressing upon the poet, now, was a sense of injustice toward his wife-to-be,—a feeling which had dwelt with him throughout their long engagement, and which, after the forced breaking of the bond between them and the indifferent financial success of his last book, bore more heavily upon him than ever. Could he have argued away this feeling, he might have continued to follow the even course of study and composition which he had thus far pursued, taking no thought but that the suns would in due season bring happiness and plenty to himself and his bride. As it was, however, his anxious spirit led him into a grave error of judgment—an error which, almost before he knew, had engulfed him in disaster, not only of fortune but of mind and body.

About the time the volume of 1842 appeared, there was brought to the attention of Tennyson by a Doctor Allen, whose

acquaintance the Tennyson family had made at Beech Hill, a scheme for wood-carving by machinery. The entire Tennyson family were at once taken with the plan. It is quite certain, however, that nothing would have come of the poet's interest, or that of his family, in Dr. Allen's proposal, had Tennyson's book of poems attained as wide a sale as he had hoped; but the comparative financial failure of the book, as we are led to believe, turned his thoughts to this new avenue of fortune, and, little by little, all his means, with much of those of his brothers and sisters, were in the venture, including the proceeds of a small estate at Grasby left him by Hallam's aunt. Thus the Patent Decorative Carving Co. was fairly launched. It is pathetic, at this distance of time, to read the optimistic references to this enterprise in Tennyson's letters. We can see that his fondest hopes were bound up with the project, and that the thought of its success filled him with enthusiasm. His illusion, however, was short-lived. A scant few months saw the collapse of the whole venture, and Tennyson arose penniless from the ruins with the heavy sense upon his conscience of having been an instrument of misfortune to his family.

"Then," says the son, "followed a season of real hardship and many trials for my father and mother, since marriage seemed to be farther off than ever. So severe a hypochondria set in upon him that his friends despaired of his life."

VI

There was no lack of kindly ministration. Tender hands took him in charge and he was removed to Cheltenham for hydropathic treatment and rest. But recovery was slow. As late as April, 1847, we read, "They tell me not to read, not to think; but they might as well tell me not to live."

The poet's progress toward health, however, was steady and sure, and by 1850 he was to be himself again, enjoying the fine mental vigor which had been his in the past and the bodily strength and endurance which had been the admiration of his acquaintances.

Pending the poet's recovery friends were busy in his interest. There was in the British treasury a fund of £1200 which was annually available for the advancement of literature. This, it

occurred to Carlyle, was a source from which assistance might be drawn for Tennyson, and he set a movement on foot which brought about that end.

Ten years before, had such an offer been made to Tennyson, his proud spirit would have thrust aside the gift.

"Nor toil for title, place or touch
of pension."—

such were his words in 1833. Even now, when the tender of £200 per annum had been made and accepted, his conscience was not free from qualm. "Something in the word 'pension,'" he wrote, "sticks in my gizzard. It is the only one I know, and perhaps would 'smell sweeter' by some other. I feel the least bit Miss Martineauish about it."

Perhaps it would have been in juster accord with what we like to believe of Tennyson's independence of mind had he yielded to his scruples and declined the pension. That he would have done so were his interest alone at stake we may be sure, broken though he was by adversity and ill-health. The rights, however, of the being whose welfare was dearer to him than his own pleaded against the rejection of the stipend. Earlier in the year, Dr. Allen, of wood-carving memory, had died, and with his death there came back to Tennyson, through a policy of insurance in his favor which a considerate friend had purchased, a portion of the loss the poet had sustained. Though the amount which Tennyson thus regained was small, it held out the hope of a modest competence when added to the annuity which was offered by the government and the probable revenue from his books; and thus the prospect of ending at last the trying suspense which both he and his bride-to-be had patiently borne, decided the poet's doubts.

It would have been more than strange had not the letters and writings of Tennyson from this time forth betrayed a gladder note. Such is true of the letters written during his brief tours in Switzerland and Cornwall, and such is equally true of the letters penned during the intervals of his stay in the hydropathic hospital at Cheltenham. It is chiefly, however, in the pages of *The Princess*, composed at this period, that the poet's more lightsome mood is evident. This, the first of Ten-

nyson's long poems, and in the view of many the most fascinating of all his poems, was written in the earliest transports of returning hope and health, and its genial tone is token enough of the new joy its author had found.

It can hardly be doubted that we are indebted for *The Princess* to Tennyson's own romantic love. The marriage with Miss Sellwood, now assured after many years of mutual devotion, lent an enlarged interest to the subject which forms the theme of that poem. It was no passing fancy with Tennyson that men and women are in the highest sense the redemption and fulfillment of each other. This sentiment was a part of his being. The idea is finely worked out in the character of the Princess Ida—perhaps in her intellectual and moral grandeur the noblest of Tennyson's women; and we see in her the final realization of the great truth which Tennyson believed to be the crowning point of the whole poem.

VII

The deeper note in *The Princess* may have been lost upon all other minds, but there was one at Horncastle which followed every word with a quiet sense of personal happiness. To her, perhaps, the secret meanings which she read took the place in some measure of that closer and sweeter communion which had been so long forbidden.

Not all of Tennyson's writings, however, gave the lady so much pleasure. There were some, indeed, which filled her with profound misgiving. Spiritual by tendency, and reared in an atmosphere of almost cloistral piety, religious devotion was rooted as firmly in her heart as was her affection for Tennyson. It is not surprising, therefore, that she was deeply troubled by the broad freedom of thought manifest to her in the stanzas of *In Memoriam*, which it was now her privilege to read in the manuscript. In after years, her attitude toward the church and its teachings became as liberal as her husband's; but in that early day, when skepticism was unfamiliar and religion was far more sacred a thing than it has since become, doubt to her seemed the unpardonable sin.

In one of the cantos of *In Memoriam*, we read what might seem a gentle remonstrance of the poet with this temper of mind:

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
Sweet-hearted you, whose light-blue eyes
Are tender over drowning flies,
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not; one indeed I knew
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true:

Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

This expostulation, however, at that stage of her religious growth, proved vain, and, as the evidence of Tennyson's unbelief grew more and more marked, she felt the two master-passions of her being—her religious duty and her love for Tennyson—rising up against each other to do battle for her soul. In this tragic contest religion triumphed, and out of the agony which only such a nature in such a crisis could suffer, the conviction arose that she and her beloved poet moved in religious spheres too far asunder, and that the pure affection she had cherished through so many dark and trying years must now be laid as a costly sacrifice upon the altar of conscience.

It is in *Memories of the Tennysons*, published by Rev. H. D. Rawnsley in 1900, that this story comes to us, and, notwithstanding the silence of the authorized biography, we are constrained to give it credence. The author had every means of knowing the truth. His father, Rev. Drummond Rawnsley, Vicar of Shiplake, had been the life-long friend of the poet, and the author's mother, Mrs. Kate Rawnsley, was a much-beloved cousin of Emily Sellwood and the confidante of that lady in her troubles.

It was Mrs. Kate Rawnsley, as we learn, whose good offices did much at this time to win her distressed cousin from the resolution of self-sacrifice she had formed. Mrs. Rawnsley,

while belonging to a less exalted type of character than her spiritual kinswoman, possessed a wholesome practical judgment wanting to the more ideal nature of the other. Through her ministrations, joined doubtless by those of her husband, there was brought before Miss Sellwood a larger and juster view of duty toward herself and toward the poet, and through the maze of conflicting feelings she was guided to the decision which every reader of these pages would have wished her to make.

To this end nothing could so well have aided as the introduction which, in 1849, Tennyson prefixed to the elegies. This prayer, for such in truth it is, was, through the medium of Mrs. Rawnsley, placed, with the remainder of *In Memoriam*, in the hands of Miss Sellwood; and its marked religious tone, though in striking contrast with many other passages of the poem, reassured her. Accordingly, in the spring of 1850, after a separation of ten years, as we have seen, the lovers met at the house of the Rawnsleys at Shiplake-on-Thames and renewed the engagement formed fourteen years before.

VIII

The simple marriage took place on June 13th following—the same month with the publication of *In Memoriam*—in the vicarage at Shiplake. The place was chosen, as is plain, out of sentiment. They deemed it fitting that the spot which had beheld the renewal of the tender bond between them should witness also its happy consummation, nor would they have thought the ceremony complete had it been pronounced by any other than that dearest of friends to whom, and to whose good wife, both felt under so heavy a sense of obligation.

Perusing the references to Tennyson's marriage in the published letters of his friends, one observes at times, not without interest, a dubious note, as if the writer were doubtful of Mrs. Tennyson's fitness as a helpmate for the great poet her husband was now universally acknowledged to be. But even those who doubted most were completely won over. No one, indeed, can study the record of that beautiful domestic life of more than forty years without feeling how admirably suited to her hus-

band she was and how deeply he was indebted to her influence and personality.

Not much has been written of Mrs. Tennyson, but what has been written conveys the impression of a singularly attractive nature. Carlyle, grim judge of women as he was, and doubtful as he had probably been of the wisdom of the marriage, indicated his recognition of his own error in a manner which was quite unmistakable. "The meeting," we are told, "was characteristic. He slowly scanned her from head to foot, then gave her a hearty shake of the hand."

Tennyson's marriage appears to have been well-pleasing to the Destinies. The years, which before had woven into his life little but adversity and cruel disappointment, now brought forth every joy and blessing. So rich with peace and plenty were his days thenceforward to the end of his long life that it might have seemed to him his gentle wife was some fairy Undine with talismanic power to shield him from the genii of evil fortune.

The Laureateship—of high import in that day—came unexpectedly to Tennyson but a few months after the marriage. The appointment was the result of the impression which the thought and beauty of *In Memoriam* had made upon Prince Albert; and the conspicuous station to which Tennyson was at once lifted in the eyes of the English public had much to do with the wide popularity his poems soon attained. The Queen's choice for the office left vacant by Wordsworth had been the poet Rogers—a fact which contrasts strangely with the warm friendship that in later years bound the Queen and the Laureate together. When, however, her choice was disappointed, the request of her consort was granted, and the appointment was offered to Tennyson, by whom, after some indecision, it was accepted.

Tennyson's memory and that of his wife are associated with two splendid homes made possible by the wide audience he came to command. Farringford, in the Isle of Wight, was rented three years after the marriage, and two years later was purchased from the proceeds of the sale of *Maud*; and many of the word-pictures of sea and sky and murmuring grove in that

sadly beautiful monodrama are but transcripts from the scenes about Farringford. Fifteen years later—partly from considerations of health, and partly that the family might enjoy their summers free from visitors—Tennyson built another residence on one of the most picturesque spots in England. This was Aldworth, so famous among great homes. Upon these two beautiful estates the poet and his wife and children passed the happy years, and there his later poems were written, including the great *Idylls*.

Tennyson lived to the ripe age of eighty-four years. His wife, who attained the same age, survived him four years. Their long engagement with its many trials was thus compensated by more than forty years of connubial peace and bliss. Nor throughout that lengthened period did the poet's devotion flag for once. To him she was ever the same object of reverence and affection she had been in the troublous days before their marriage. Tennyson never forgot that she had believed in him and trusted his future in the slow years when fame and fortune were so reluctant to appear—believed and trusted till the fresh bloom of youth had faded from her cheek and the friends of her girlhood spoke of her pityingly.

It was this most precious influence of his life that the poet embodied in the character of Edith when, toward the end of his life, he wrote and dedicated to her *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*:

Strong in will and rich in wisdom, Edith, loyal, lowly, sweet,
Feminine to her inmost heart and feminine to her tender feet,

Very woman of very woman, nurse of ailing body and mind,
She that link'd the broken chain that bound me to my kind.

Alfred Tennyson sleeps in Westminster Abbey, as befits England's great Laureate. In the village churchyard near Aldworth rests the body of his loyal and loving helpmate, and on the simple tablet erected to her memory within the church are these words from the poet's dedication to her of the *Enoch Arden* volume:

Dear, near and true,—no truer Time himself
Can prove you, tho' he make you ever more
Dearer and nearer.

The Criminality of Jean Paul Marat

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History is doubly complex because it is both art and science. Were it art alone, the sense of beauty would be enough to distinguish good history from bad and to discourage the unartistic historian. Were it science alone, the ardor of a set method and the orthodoxy of fixed laws would tend to exclude the uninitiate. But because history is an art with only amorphous, if devout, pretensions to science, the demands of scientific method do not scare off the amateur, while the demands for artistic presentation often do deprive the mere scientist of his audience. Unfortunately, the artist untrammelled by lofty conceptions of scientific truth can almost always get a hearing. As a result, the lay world is full of notions about historical figures that are either misrepresentations of fact or wholly fiction. There is no end of myths, legends and falsehoods that are commonly believed, and recent years have seen the rise, particularly in the biographical field, of a long series of painstaking studies endeavoring to restore wrongfully damaged souls and to damage others unworthily intact. But yet popular notions continue to thrive.

A striking example of a deodorized reputation is that of Jean Paul Marat. The stench that rose from his remains after Carlyle, Michelet and Taine had completed their inquests, in which they permitted only Marat's worst enemies to testify, bade fair to discourage any other historical coroners from further autopsy. Yet there were found two valiant French biographers, Bougeart¹ and Chevrement,² who repaired the ravages and revealed Marat as no more vicious than an enthusiastic, emotional, jealous patriot may be expected to be in a time of crushing stress. Bax³ carried on the work of salvation in English. Perhaps the three did too good a job, removing from Marat even the odors that an ordinary human is supposed to

¹ *Jean Paul Marat l'Ami du Peuple* (2 vols., Paris, 1865).

² *Jean Paul Marat, Esprit Politique* (2 vols., Paris, 1880).

³ *The Friend of the People* (Boston 1901).

have, but at any rate since their time the best guides to the French Revolution have permitted their charges to remain in his presence long enough to observe him with more interest than disgust. Aulard has not been as enthusiastic as Stephens; Jaurès has feared to tread where Kropotkin rushed in; Sagnac has been more reticent than Mathiez; but none of them has held his nose in nauseous indignation.

Part of the task of Chevrement, Bougeart and Bax was to prove that when Marat had lived in England, as he did between 1765 and 1777, he did not live in poverty and in crime, shifting from city to city, from job to job, from jail to jail, but had earned a comfortable income and a solid reputation as a physician and as a writer on subjects medical, philosophical and political. A small group of English and French antiquarians, notable among whom were Cabanès,⁴ De Witt,⁵ and Roberts,⁶ continued their work and confirmed their findings. So well established did the respectability of Marat while in England appear, that in 1923 in a brief biography of him I dismissed all of the accusations against him with the summary statement that "he was a gentleman of considerable professional and social standing in London."⁷

But now in 1924 comes Mr. Sidney L. Phipson, who in his *Jean Paul Marat: His Career in England and France Before the French Revolution*, not only reconfirms everything that everybody ever said about the poverty and wickedness of Jean Paul Marat, but adds a few details that nobody had thought of mentioning before. Mr. Phipson has conducted his researches with industry if not with discretion, with ingenuity if not with care, and is able to present a burden of testimony that would once more seem to make the air of England in the years 1765-1787 smell of putrefaction. In brief, Mr. Phipson's story is as follows: In 1772 Marat, under the name of Le Maitre, *alias* Mara, taught French at Warrington Academy. In 1776 he robbed the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford of some of its coins and medals and was sentenced to the Hulks at Woolwich for

⁴ *Marat Inconnu, l'Homme Privé* (2nd Ed., Paris, 1911).

⁵ *La Jeunesse de Marat* (Paris, n.d.).

⁶ *Marat as an Englishman in Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1900.

⁷ *Tragedy of Jean Paul Marat* (Girard, Kansas), p. 7.

larceny. He escaped within a few months and managed to reach France. In 1786 he returned to England and set up as a teacher of tambouring in Edinburgh. Here he was arrested for debt and upon his release left Scotland for Bristol. In Bristol he failed as a bookseller, was again arrested for debt and, having been released by the efforts of a philanthropic society, returned to France in January, 1788.

It would be idle to point out to Mr. Phipson that in 1772 Marat published at London an *Essay on the Human Soul*. He knows that and would probably answer that that fact alone does not disprove that in the same year Marat taught at Warrington. Indeed there can be no doubt that a man named Le Maitre *alias* Mara did teach at Warrington about that year and that that gentleman in 1776 did rob the Ashmolean Museum and was sentenced to the Woolwich Hulks. Mr. Phipson proves this point conclusively. When, however, he tries to prove that this Le Maitre was Jean Paul Marat, he is not nearly so convincing. His strongest pieces of evidence are two letters, supposedly written from Edinburgh in May, 1774, to Dr. John Aiken, the son of the senior tutor at Warrington Academy, asking for the hand of the Doctor's sister. Since Miss Aiken resided exclusively with her father at Warrington, Mr. Phipson argues that Marat could have become acquainted with her only if he were engaged as a tutor at the Académie. Now Marat may have been in Edinburgh in 1774, but I doubt whether he wrote these letters. In the first place, they are quoted from memory by a writer in *Notes and Queries*.⁸ Furthermore, they contain the statement that the writer had "no objections to becoming a Protestant to please his brother-in-law and future wife"; and Marat had always been a Protestant! His mother had been a Genevan Calvinist; his father, originally a Catholic, had turned Calvinist before Marat was born. There is no reason to believe that Marat had ever become anything other than a Calvinist, unless it was to adopt the fashionable cult of Deism. The error is exactly the kind of a slip that a forger or a joker would be likely to make. But Mr. Phipson, who for less reason rejects two letters hitherto accepted by scholars as

⁸ 12 Series, vol. XI, July 15, 1922, p. 53.

authentic which would disprove points that he makes against Marat, nevertheless accepts these two. All the other "proof" that Mr. Phipson advances, if it establishes anything at all, simply indicates that someone with a name like Mara (it is significant that by 1772 Marat had added the *t* to his) did teach at Warrington. Former students of his probably did see him at the Woolwich Hulks, as Mr. Phipson claims, but since none of these students seem ever to have seen Marat, the simple fact that they chose to believe and to state that this Le Maitre *alias* Mara was Jean Paul Marat (it was practically their duty as patriotic Englishmen at the time they made their statements to believe ill of the French) by no means proves theirs or Mr. Phipson's case.

But if for the sake of argument we assume that Le Maitre was Marat and that Marat therefore was sentenced to five years in the Hulks at Woolwich on March 6, 1777, how can we explain the indubitable presence of Marat in Paris on June 24, 1777, when he was appointed Doctor to the Body Guard of the Count of Artois? Mr. Phipson rises to the occasion by pointing out that on April 23, 1777, fourteen men (all unnamed) escaped from Woolwich and six of them were never recaptured. Le Maitre, he assumes, was one of these, because, forsooth, there is no record that Le Maitre ever obtained a pardon or a remission of sentence. If Le Maitre was really Marat, we are expected to believe that in the two months between April 23 and June 24, 1777, he went all the way from Woolwich to Paris, penniless and fugitive; set up again as a doctor; was entrusted with the case of the Marquise de l'Aubespine; restored her to health; seduced her; enlisted her good offices in his behalf; and thereby secured the appointment to the medical staff of the Count of Artois. If Le Maitre was really Marat, Marat was a "fast worker," indeed.

Mr. Phipson admits that until about February, 1778, the arrant charlatan Marat managed to hold on to this position as doctor of the body guard of the Count of Artois, but insists that after that time he was made veterinary in the Count's stables. He has consulted the proper volumes of the *Almanach Royal* and has found that Marat is listed there as Doctor of the

Body Guard of the Count of Artois until 1787, when his successor was named, although we know he resigned in 1783 or 1784. Mr. Phipson prefers to believe, however, that because Marat, whose office was situated in a quarter known as the Stables (*Les Écuries*), signed a letter *Doctor of the Stables of the Count of Artois* (*Médecin des Écuries du Comte d'Artois*) and because his enemies *after his death* remembered that he had had a peculiar way of prescribing horse-mixture for human ills, he was really demoted to a veterinary's rank after less than a year's trial as a physician. Nevertheless, we have faith in the *Almanach*, which, like any other almanac, was made up year by year without imagination *sine ira et studio*. To be sure, it did commit the half-error of listing Marat from 1784 to 1786, when he held no office, but it is easier to understand how an almanac can continue for three years to name the last incumbent as holding a vacant office than how it can list him for nine years as holding one office, when he actually held another for six of those nine years and (a point Mr. Phipson entirely ignores) when someone else is listed for all nine years as having held that other office. If Mr. Phipson had been content to accept Marat as a pretty good doctor, he would not have had to prove accepted letters forgeries and to disregard other contemporary evidence and could have explained away practically all his own evidence to the contrary as *ex post facto* information given by people who had every reason to want to make out a good case against Marat.

The weakest point of Mr. Phipson's story is the series of offenses between 1786 and 1788 committed in Edinburgh and Bristol that he tries to fasten to Marat's record. Despite Mr. Phipson's belief that "from 1786 to 1788 he [Marat] is plunged into limbo again," we have as definite a notion of what Marat was doing in those years as can reasonably be expected, over a hundred and thirty years after his death, of a man not constantly in the public eye. Brissot in his *Mémoires*⁹ stated definitely that he saw Marat in Paris before the Revolution, and Lafayette,¹⁰ who, however, probably did not know Marat at this time, likewise says he was in France before the Bastille fell.

⁹ Vol. I, pp. 361-362, (Paris 1830).

¹⁰ Vol. II, pp. 286-287.

Neither of these two statements need be taken to apply to the years 1786-1788, but if Marat had been in England or elsewhere than France in those years, Brissott undoubtedly, and Lafayette probably, would have said so, as both are anxious to prove that Marat took no part in the early stages of the French Revolution. Furthermore on May 6, 1786, Marat wrote a letter dated Paris;¹¹ in 1787 he published a translation of Newton's *Optics* at Paris; and in 1788 he issued a physical treatise entitled *Mémoires Académique ou Nouvelles Découvertes sur la Lumière*, also at Paris. It appears reasonably certain that in 1788 Marat was in Paris (Mr. Phipson is willing to have him return there in January, 1788), and while there is not as much evidence for 1787 and 1786, yet since scientific writings do require a certain amount of previous investigation, which can better be carried on in Paris laboratories than in English jails, and since there seems to be no explanation of why he should be dating letters from Paris if he really were in Edinburgh, it seems safe to conclude that Marat was in France practically all of that period. At any rate, he undoubtedly was not "plunged into limbo again" and it will require rather conclusive evidence to disprove the belief, warranted by all we know about him at this time, that he was in Paris.

But what evidence does Mr. Phipson advance? Nothing more than a statement made in March, 1793, about six or seven years after the event, by an anonymous writer in the *London Star*. England, it must be remembered, was at war with France in March, 1793, and anonymous London journalists would be very likely to win approval if they could find stories to the discredit of one of the leaders of the French Republic. This particular journalist informs us that a man, calling himself John White, taught tambouring a few years ago in Edinburgh, was arrested for debt, found to be the same gentleman who had taught French at the Warrington Academy and had served at Woolwich for robbing the Ashmolean Museum, was sent to jail for a few months and on his release took up his residence near London. From a recent investigation, the writer states, it is said that Marat is this same John White.

¹¹ Vellay, *Correspondance de Marat*, p. 95.

Before discussing the truth of this account, it might be well to point out how parts of the story of Mr. Phipson, who accepts it as altogether true, are contradicted by it. This *Star* account states that the Warrington instructor was sentenced to some years of hard labor on the Thames. It mentions nothing about his escape shortly after his sentence began, as it certainly would have if the writer had known of it. The impression one gets from reading this item is that the prisoner served his entire sentence, in which case he could not possibly have been Marat, who lived in Paris after 1777. Moreover, this statement says he lived for nine months "in this neighborhood"—that is, near London—and left about the beginning of the year 1787 for France. Most of the nine months' stay near London must have been, then, in 1786. If before leaving Edinburgh for the neighborhood of London, he had taught tambouring in Edinburgh long enough to have contracted "debts to a very considerable amount" and then to have absconded, to have been apprehended at Newcastle and brought back, to have gone through the legal technicalities of a *cessio bonorum* and then to have been detained in jail for several months—of all of which this newspaper article assures us—he must have been in Edinburgh at least toward the end of 1785, when even Mr. Phipson conceded the real Marat was in Paris. Furthermore, Mr. Phipson's story after this point is that Marat lived in Bristol until December, 1787. Now Bristol is hardly in the neighborhood of London and December, 1787, is hardly the beginning of 1787. Either, then, this piece of evidence is false or the other evidence of Mr. Phipson's is.

✓ But, again, let us assume that it is true and that its conflict with Mr. Phipson's other testimony is due only to pardonable inaccuracy somewhere rather than to deliberate falsehood. What reason does the *Star* journalist give for believing that John White was Le Maitre and that both were Jean Paul Marat? For associating White with Le Maitre he says only that evidence at the former's trial proved this. It may be, however, that knowing of the Le Maitre case of 1777, of which many current periodicals carried reports, and finding that this Le Maitre sported an *alias* of Mara and perhaps that other

people had already associated his name with Jean Paul Marat, he simply assumed that since John White was Marat, he must also have been Le Maitre. The writer in the *Star* does not seem to have been aware of a work written by a Reverend Huddesford, also in 1793, which Mr. Phipson quotes to prove that Le Maitre likewise ran a tambour shop at Oxford. Mr. Phipson, however, evidently thought it wise not to quote that part of Mr. Huddesford's statement in which he claims that Marat was in jail no less than nine times while he lived in England—a statement which Mr. Phipson probably believed would ruin Huddesford's value as a trustworthy source of information on Marat. However, even if John White and Le Maitre were the same man, what reason does the *Star* article give for considering John White and Marat identical? Only that there had been "an investigation lately held at Edinburgh," which, however, gave him nothing more conclusive to present than that this John White "was very ill-looking; of a diminutive size; a man of uncommon vivacity; of a very turbulent disposition and possessed of a very uncommon share of legal knowledge. It is said that while here he used to call his children Marat which he said was his family name." Now Marat was ill-looking in 1793 (although the fact that he managed to seduce two and possibly more ladies, according to Mr. Phipson, would rather tend to support the contention of more favorable biographers that before he devoted himself to the Revolution he took more pains with his personal appearance). Also, Marat always was of diminutive size and uncommon vivacity. In 1793, too, Marat was of a very turbulent disposition. Likewise Marat did possess a very uncommon share of legal knowledge, but in 1786 he would more probably have impressed people with his share of medical knowledge, which he would have taken particular pains to display especially if he were a quack. In 1793, however, an English journalist was not as likely to know this as to assume that as a member of a great legislative body Marat had an uncommon share of legal knowledge. In describing John White, therefore, the journalist seems to have had a picture of what he believed John White would have looked like if he had been the Marat of 1793 rather than what

Marat actually was in 1786. Besides, it is difficult to grasp why a man who hides his identity under an assumed name should publicly call his children by his real name. And then, if Marat ever had any children, it is strange that this obscure item in a London newspaper should be the only extant reference to them. Even the Reverend Mr. Huddesford assigns to him only a wife. Marat, as a matter of fact, never took a wife until his union with Simonne Evrard in 1792. Mr. Phipson seems shocked that there never was a legal or religious ceremony uniting Marat with Simonne Evrard. But Mr. Phipson, we take it, is a conventional Englishman of a post-Victorian period, while Marat was an eighteenth century revolutionist steeped in the naturalistic philosophy of Rousseau. Simonne, Marat, the Evrard family, the Marat family and their friends, were not at all outraged. But that is beside the point, which is that John White, if there ever was a John White and even if he was the same man as Le Maitre, must have been someone other than Jean Paul Marat.

Mr. Phipson now has Marat go from an Edinburgh jail into the bookselling business at Bristol, where again he was sent to prison for debt. This time he was released by a society for the relief of petty debtors. Two searches by City Librarians of Bristol, separated from each other by an interval of about fifty years, were unable to produce anything more to support this contention than a statement in a comparatively recent book (Latimer's *Annals of Bristol*) to the effect that "a Frenchman calling himself F. C. M. G. Maratt Amiatt, who had practiced in various English towns as a teacher and a quack doctor" did encounter such a fate and was released from jail in December, 1787. "It was not until some years later that he was identified in the person of the fanatical democrat Jean Paul Marat." Again one wonders why a man named Jean Paul Marat should want to use a name like F. C. M. G. Maratt Amiatt. If he wanted to hide his identity, certainly he would never have used Maratt as one of the two of the six names in his alias that he spelled out. But this statement says that he was identified later in the person of Jean Paul Marat. In other words, it claims that somebody who saw this Maratt Amiatt also saw Jean Paul

Marat and recognized that both were the same man. There are only two other statements produced by Mr. Phipson to this effect and we shall see that both of these are from the same source. Even though neither of these two mentions the name of the unfortunate bookseller or gives the date of his release, unless Mr. Latimer was drawing on his imagination or was able to use documents that both of the City Librarians of Bristol were unable to find (neither of which suppositions is likely) he must have acquired his information from the same source as the other two. That source was the person who thought he recognized in Jean Paul Marat the Maratt Amiatt of Bristol fame. Who that man was we learn from a letter sent to *Notes and Queries* in October, 1862, by one C. J. P., quoting a letter written in 1822 by a Charles Joseph Harford, in which Mr. Harford says that "the late Mr. James Ireland . . . told my father [and presumably his father told him] that being in Paris, I forget what year, he went to the National Assembly [he means the National Convention] and took his servant with him, who on seeing Marat rise to speak, assured his master with astonishment the man was the very person to whom he had often taken money and victuals from him when a prisoner in Bristol Gaol." It is worth noting that Mr. Ireland himself, who is our source of information here, had never seen the Bristol prisoner. It was only his servant who had seen him in 1787. Between December 1787, and September 1792, when Marat became a member of the National Convention, is five years, and five years is a long time to remember the face of a casual and brief acquaintance seen under unfavorable circumstances. Marat's face, too, had altered considerably about this time, racked as he was by disease and care. Mr. Ireland, therefore, had altogether insufficient evidence for connecting Marat with Maratt Amiatt. Nevertheless, when he came home he spread the story, telling it to Mr. Harford, Sr. and probably to others. The news got abroad, then, in Bristol that a man who had once been in a Bristol jail was now the bloodthirsty leader of the French Revolution. If Mr. Ireland did not remember the name of the bookseller, his servant probably did or some other people who had known the book-

seller did, and the servant must have remembered the date of his visits to the jail. In that way, either by direct or indirect association with Mr. Ireland (probably the latter, since his book was written in 1887), Latimer got his story.

And Dr. Turner, whose articles on the history of Warrington Academy¹² first associated, in writing at least, the name of Marat with both Woolwich and Bristol, likewise got his story from the same source. Dr. Turner had been a student at Warrington himself. He tells us that one of Le Maitre's pupils at Warrington, a native of Bristol, saw him at Woolwich. Now Mr. Charles Joseph Harford, in the letter just quoted, states that his father "saw this villain in 1772 at Warminster (*sic.*)!" By "this villain" he means Le Maitre, whom he is associating with Marat and, on Mr. Ireland's testimony, with the Bristol bookseller. He goes on to say that his father and a Mr. Lloyd, also an alumnus of "Warminster," both saw Le Maitre afterwards in the Woolwich Hulks, although Mr. Lloyd had to point him out to Mr. Harford. Since Mr. Lloyd is designated as of Newbury, there is no doubt as to who was the native of Bristol whom Dr. Turner refers to as having recognized the former Warrington tutor. It was Mr. Harford, Sr. Since Mr. Harford, Sr. does not appear ever to have committed to paper any narration of his encounter with Le Maitre at Woolwich, it must be that Dr. Turner got this piece of information from Mr. Harford directly. The fact that both Turner and Harford had been pupils at Warrington enhances the probability of this. It is even likely that they were fellow students, since Warrington closed in 1783 and since Dr. Turner wrote his articles in 1813, which would have made it necessary for him to have been over sixty years of age, an uncommon longevity in the early nineteenth century, if he had attended Warrington much before 1772. But however Dr. Turner acquired his information, there can be no doubt that it is Mr. Harford whom he has in mind. Now it is equally clear whom he has in mind when he refers to a gentleman who "personally relieved [the alleged Marat] in Bristol gaol" and "afterwards saw him in the National Assembly in Paris in 1792." He

¹² In *The Monthly Repository*, 1813.

means, of course, Mr. Ireland, although, as we have seen, it was Mr. Ireland's servant and not Mr. Ireland himself who personally relieved the Bristol prisoner. Turner may have known Mr. Ireland personally, but it seems more likely that he got this piece of information from Mr. Harford, too. Now Mr. Harford never saw the real Marat. Mr. Ireland never saw Maratt Amiatt. Mr. Ireland's servant never saw Le Maitre. It was Mr. Ireland's servant who saw the real Marat and who believed him to be the same person as Maratt Amiatt. He told Mr. Ireland so. Mr. Ireland told Mr. Harford so. Mr. Harford, who had probably already assumed that Le Maitre *alias* Mara whom he had seen at Woolwich doing time for larceny was the notorious Marat of the French Convention, as the Reverend Huddesford and the *Star* reporter had already done or were soon about to do, was now more than ever confirmed in his belief. Mr. Harford told both Dr. Turner (or someone who in turn told Dr. Turner) and his son about his having recognized Marat at Woolwich and his friend's having recognized him at Bristol. Thus these two sources are shown to be derived from the same weak testimony of a servant who thought that a man whom he had not seen for years and whom he had never known well was the Jean Paul Marat of 1792, who had changed in appearance so very much from what he would have looked like if the servant really had seen him in 1787. Mr. Latimer, author of the *Annals of Bristol*, even if he did not invent the resounding name of F. C. M. G. Maratt Amiatt and the date (December 1787) of his departure from Bristol, must have used the same source or a Bristol tradition based on that source. It approaches the inconceivable that he alone in conducting researches on the general field of Bristol history should have been able to find any other source on this particular affair, when two trained workers, presumably well acquainted with Bristol's history as its City Librarians, one working before and the other after Mr. Latimer wrote his book and both trying to find just such a source, had to admit defeat. Mr. Ireland's man has a great deal for one poor servant to account for.

Similarity of name and similarity of appearance are pretty good evidence, to be sure, but just to show how, using these

and nothing more as evidence, it can be claimed that two of these crimes were committed by another man, I am going to wrong Marat's brother Jean Pierre—wrong, I say, because it is by no means clear that these offenses were committed by one man and that that man was Jean Pierre Mara any more than it was Jean Paul Marat. It can be assumed with as much safety as Mr. Phipson allows himself in some of his assumptions that Jean Pierre and Jean Paul looked very much alike. We know, at least, that when Croker, the famous collector of pamphlets on the French Revolution, went to see Albertine Marat, Jean Paul's sister, he was directed by Marat's former printer, who said she and her brother were as like as *deux gouttes d'eau*. Croker adds that "from all report and busts," he could readily believe it. There was then a striking family resemblance which Jean Pierre may also be assumed to have had. Now John White, who practiced tambouring in Edinburgh, who had a wife or at least children whom he called Marat, which he said was his family name, might just as easily have been Jean Pierre Mara as Jean Paul Marat—in fact, better, since it is more likely that he would have learned tambouring from his father and have been practicing it than his brother who left home at sixteen and had a doctor's degree, which even Mr. Phipson admits was valid though undeserved. We have a motive for Jean Pierre's taking an *alias* in his desire not to disgrace by his poverty the family of his famous brother Jean Paul, known in London and Paris as a doctor and scientist. The statement that "he was ill looking; of a diminutive size; a man of uncommon vivacity; of a turbulent disposition, and possessed of a very uncommon share of legal knowledge," can all be explained by the fact that he was his brother's brother, except, perhaps, for the legal knowledge, which, however, he may have picked up somehow or other. The fact that the *Star* states that his defense brought out that he had taught French at Warrington Academy (at a time when he was only a child) can be explained (as is probably true) by the anxiety of the author of the article to link the Marat name with the tutor-convict—by the invention of evidence and connecting links if necessary. He may be pardoned for thinking the Edinburgh individual old enough to have been the Warrington

tutor, since he believed him to have been Jean Paul Marat. If we were Mr. Phipson, however, we should simply disregard this part of the article, as we have seen him do with another part of it which stated that John White went to live near London for nine months and left England about the beginning of the year 1787. In Bristol again the similarity of the names Maratt Amiatt and Marat can just as easily be explained by using Jean Pierre as Jean Paul for a scapegoat, and the confusion of Mr. Ireland's servant can be attributed to the well-known family resemblance. This case against Jean Pierre Mara in no way has to conflict with an alibi, since we know practically nothing about his movements, and it leaves us free to assume, as we have good reason to believe, that Jean Paul Marat was in Paris between 1786 and 1788. Our case against Jean Pierre would have been perfect if we could have attached the Warrington-Ashmolean-Woolwich identity to him, for Le Maitre gave as his full name John Peter Le Maitre *alias* Mara; and John Peter is simply the anglicized form of Jean Pierre while Mara was the way Jean Pierre would have spelled his name, Jean Paul having added the *t* only after leaving the paternal fold. But Jean Pierre was born only in 1767 and was only five years old in 1772 and ten in 1777. We must rest content, therefore, simply with showing how easily, by using Mr. Phipson's methods, the Edinburgh and Bristol careers can be associated with him rather than with his older brother. On the whole, it is well that our case must remain imperfect, for if it were not, sooner or later someone would be found to believe it, and it would be an obviously unfair application of the law of compensation to restore the integrity of one man's character by destroying that of another.

And so we still insist upon Marat's respectability in England and answer his foes with the words, just a tinge too self-righteous, that he himself used in 1793 in his own defense:

I approach my fiftieth year. But since sixteen I have been absolute master of my own conduct. I lived two years at Bordeaux, ten in London, one in Dublin, one at the Hague, Utrecht and Amsterdam, nineteen in Paris, and I have travelled over half Europe. If the police registers of these various countries are searched I defy any man to find my name concerned in a single illicit transaction. If the records are examined, I challenge any person under heaven to reproach me with one dishonest act.

Arthur Hugh Clough As Revealed in His Prose*

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Seventy-five years ago in the conflict for freedom of thought, the English intellectuals fought their battles among the educated classes and carried the day. The man of the middle and lower classes knew little or nothing of the more subtle phases of the controversy; if he took any interest in the agitation it was because of the fulminations of his preacher who, in truly modern fashion, like as not characterized all liberals as atheists. The common man of three generations ago lacked to a great degree even the smattering of learning that today makes him a dangerous foe to the spirit of impartial investigation. Today the spirit of truth is frequently opposed in the church, in the schools, and even in the universities as well—wherever the forces of fanaticism or of ignorance prevail. The fight for intellectual freedom was in Clough's day confined largely to the church.

The Church of England a hundred years ago was in the clutches of empty ritualism. It lacked the fervor of the Dissenters; the beauty of its symbolism seemed lost in worldliness and Mammonism. It had inherited much of the rationalistic spirit of the preceding century. Too often the church was a crustacean shell, fixed and fossilized—and empty. Yet despite these conditions that militated against the efficacy of the church as an institution, it was attracting to itself some of the most able men in England—John Keble, Thomas Arnold, J. H. Newman, F. D. Maurice, W. G. Ward, and Arthur Stanley. It was largely through them that the Oxford Movement came about.

The Dissenting churches, on the other hand, were fiercely fervid in their beliefs. They were the dwelling-places of ardent piety, heated controversy, and, too frequently, of scandalous backbiting. Their religion was a nightmare of hideous intolerance, narrow insistence upon a creed, and a soul-vitiating ugliness.

* I would refer the reader for a somewhat different point of view to an essay, "Clough's Prose," by Professor Stanley T. Williams, in his *Studies in Victorian Literature*, New York, 1923.

ness of spirit. It was the emptiness of the Established Church and the sordidness of the Dissenters that made the early Victorian intellectuals turn to the white radiance of pagan antiquity or else to the gloom of despair. It turned men like Newman to an exaltation of the glories of medieval Catholicism.

In an age such as this, it was inevitable that brilliant young men entering the universities, especially Oxford, should undergo profound reactions from orthodoxy. Among these was Arthur Hugh Clough.

Born at Liverpool, January 1, 1819, the son of James Butler Clough and Anne Perfect, he spent his childhood chiefly in Charleston, South Carolina. He then crossed to England and entered Rugby, at that time under the headmastership of Thomas Arnold. In 1836 he won the Balliol Scholarship at Oxford, the culmination of a school career in which he had won every honor Rugby had to offer.

At Oxford, Clough was plunged into the movement that was then in full sway under the leadership of Newman, Keble, and Froude. It was perhaps unfortunate for his academic career that he should have become so deeply concerned with theological problems at such an early age. He failed to maintain the high standard of scholarship that he had set at Rugby. In 1842, however, he was awarded a Fellowship at Oriel. In 1848 he resigned his fellowship because he did not feel that he could conscientiously remain in a university that required its fellows to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church. After a period of foreign travel he was appointed Head of University Hall, London. In 1852 he decided to come to New England, where under the patronage of Lowell and Emerson he was received cordially in Boston and in Cambridge. After six months in America he was called back to England to accept a position in the Education Office. In 1854 he was married. At this period he spent a great deal of time in helping Miss Florence Nightingale, a relative of his wife's, in her efforts to reform military administration. The last year of his life he spent in travel on the continent, chiefly in Greece and in Italy. He died in Florence in 1861, at the age of forty-two.

Such are the main facts in the life of a man who in a sense may be called a failure. He gave up for a scruple a don-ship at Oriel—a position for which he was eminently fitted by nature and by training. He had the thinker's discontent with his generation; he exposed its shams with the deftness of a surgeon. His diagnosis is keen and unemotional; sometimes he does not urge a remedy for the disease.

Certain of Clough's biographers have commented caustically and unsympathetically upon the lad's pious turn of mind while he was at Rugby. They have accused him of unboyish cant, they have insisted that none but a prig would write as he wrote to his brother; "No doubt you will feel very much the loss of any one to talk to about religion, but let this, my dear George, only make you keep more close to God." The late Professor Winchester, in his delightful essay on Clough in *An Old Castle*, defends him against the charge: "Not that there was anything priggish or morbid about him," he says. "He was not only the best scholar in his form, but the best goal-keeper in the football field and the best swimmer in the river; a buoyant, ambitious, healthy fellow."

Religious excitement almost bordering upon hysteria is not an unknown phenomenon of adolescence. The years from fifteen to eighteen are years of devotion to causes, to institutions, and to persons. If at that period the religious element is fostered in an emotional nature, the youth frequently becomes almost morbidly interested in the church or in sentimental exaltation of the mysteries of Christian experience. If that element is fostered in an intellectual nature, the result is almost inevitably reaction and agnosticism in college or later.

Rugby, during Clough's stay there as a student, was well calculated to foster the religious element in adolescence. The personality of Thomas Arnold, its great headmaster, had so deeply permeated the life of the school that the more serious students took his point of view. As Professor Winchester remarks; "His famous statement to his boys became the watchword of Rugby; 'It is not necessary that this should be a school of three hundred, or even one hundred, or even of fifty boys; but it is necessary that it should be a school of Christian

gentlemen.' And such he made it. It was not so much that he taught religion; rather that all his teaching was religious. He was not prone to religious introspection. His whole cast of mind was not philosophical or speculative, but outward and practical. Impatient of our factitious distinctions between sacred and secular things, he thought and spoke of religion as duty and service rather than as belief, and as binding equally upon all the acts of life."

Combined with Clough's zeal for his brother's spiritual welfare and that of his companions, was an intense love of his school and a great desire to improve it in every way. "There is," he writes to his brother, "a deal of evil springing up in the school, and it is to be feared that the tares will choke much of the wheat. . . . I am trying, if possible, to show . . . that good is not necessarily disagreeable, and that a Christian may be, and is likely to be a gentleman." In 1836, he writes to his friend, J. N. Simkinson: "I verily believe my whole being is soaked through with the wishing and hoping and striving to do the school good, or rather to keep it up and hinder it from failing in this, I do think, very critical time, so that all my cares and affections and conversations, thoughts, words and deeds, look to that involuntarily. I am afraid you will be inclined to think this 'cant', and I am conscious that even one's truest feelings, if very frequently put out in the light, do make a bad and disagreeable appearance."

When he reached Oxford, Clough preferred it to Cambridge: "At Oxford we only form part of a large set," he writes to Simkinson, "and there is more hope there that a little leaven will leaven the whole lump. . . . To be sure, there will only be Stanley, Lake, Fox, Arnold, and myself, but then there are a great number of very nice men, with whom, I hope we shall get more acquainted, and this will be better. Do not think I under-rate the blessing of Rugby friends; I am only anxious to give others that blessing."

Few men would care to be judged finally by their utterances at seventeen. The wisdom of their elders becomes ridiculous when spoken by their young and imitative voices. When Clough writes to his younger brother he unconsciously echoes

the sentiments of Doctor Arnold: he is the headmaster and George is his pupil.

Nor was Doctor Arnold's influence shown merely in Clough's words in his letters. As the editor of the school paper and as a boy among his fellows, he threw himself into the bettering of the school. Inevitably his interest became less exclusively centered in his studies. Although he continued to lead his class, he felt the lure of extra-curricular activity—not an un-modern experience. This tendency developed further at Oxford, where to the surprise of his friends he took a second.

At the university, Clough was drawn half-unwillingly into the vortex of religious theorizing that was then involving the greatest of the Oxford men of the day. The tractarians under the leadership of Newman were making a valiant effort to revitalize the Church of England. As the controversy became more and more bitter, it was almost inevitable that a thoughtful student of Clough's type of mind should become interested in it. He wrote to his friend, J. P. Gell, from Oxford, November 18, 1838, "I don't quite like hearing so much of these matters as I do, but I suppose if one can only keep steadily to one's work (which I wish I did), and quite resolve to forget all the words one has heard, and to theorise only for amusement, there is no harm in it." The following year he wrote to Simkinson from Oxford: "I truly hope to escape the vortex of philosophy and discussion (whereof Ward is the centre), as it is the most exhausting exercise in the world." In 1840 he wrote to Simkinson again, this time from Liverpool, "That I have been a good deal unsettled in mind at times at Oxford, and that I have done a number of foolish things, is true enough, and I dare say the change from Rugby life to its luxury and apparent irresponsibility has had a good deal of ill effect upon me."

There is comparatively little known about the details of Clough's college days. We know, however, that he read Coleridge extensively, the German philosophers, and also Carlyle and Emerson. His tutor was the famous W. G. Ward whose influence undoubtedly encouraged him in his absorption in intellectual problems. An occasional letter to a relative or to

a friend indicates his deep interest in religious matters, but we have no intimate record of the spiritual growth that must have preceded his emergence as a mature man who for a scruple would renounce a livelihood, who by some was called an atheist, by others, a liberal Christian.

The Fellows of Oxford University were required to sign the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. When Clough was elected a Fellow he felt that he could not honestly accept these tenets of the church. "It is not," he wrote to Gell, October 8, 1843, "so much from any definite objection to this or that point, as general dislike to subscription, and strong feeling of its being a bondage and a very heavy one, and one that may cramp and cripple one for life." A year later he writes to the same friend, "If I begin to think about God, there arise a thousand questions, and whether the Thirty-Nine Articles answer them at all, or whether I should not answer them in the most diametrically opposite purpose, is a matter of great doubt."

The intellectual half-hysterically religious lad of ten years before had gone through the normal process of his development. His faith became less and less orthodox; his thought, more and more questioning. In the letter to Gell quoted above, he continued, "without in the least denying Christianity, I feel little that I can call its power. Believing myself to be in my unconscious creed in some shape or other an adherent to its doctrines, I keep within its pale; still, whether the spirit of the age, whose lacquey and flunkey I submit to be, will prove to be this kind or that kind, I can't the least say. Sometimes I have doubts whether it won't turn out to be no Christianity at all."

To this uncertainty of thought and purpose that Clough was experiencing at twenty-five, succeeded an attitude of agnosticism. His refusal to assert complete knowledge is a stirring rebuke to the forces of intolerance: in May, 1847, he wrote to his sister from Oriel: "I think others are more right who say boldly, we don't understand it, and therefore we won't fall down and worship it. Though there is no occasion for adding, 'there is nothing in it,' I should say, until I know, I will wait, and if I am not born with the power to discover, I

will do what I can with what knowledge I have—trust to God's justice, and neither pretend to know, nor, without knowing, pretend to embrace; nor yet oppose those who, by whatever means, are increasing or trying to increase knowledge."

One cannot fail to notice in Clough's letters during the late forties a singular spirit of kindness and tolerance towards those whose point of view was at odds with his own. "Do we not," he asks in a letter to Thomas Arnold, "work best by digging deepest? by avoiding polemics, and searching to display the real thing?" His attitude toward those who disagree with him was one rather of sadness than of bitterness. In discussing the religious tradition he says: "I do believe that, strive as I will, I am restricted, and grasp as I may, I can never hold the complete truth. But that does not the least imply that I am justified in shutting the eyes of my understanding to the facts of science, or its ears to the criticisms of history, nor yet in neglecting those pulsations of spiritual instinct which come to me from association at one time with Unitarians, at another with Calvinists, or again with Episcopalians and Roman Catholics." "And it appears to me," he continues, "that it is much more the apparent dispensation of things that we should gradually widen, than we should narrow and individualize our creeds. . . . I feel more inclined to put faith in the currents of the river of things, than because it runs one way to think I must therefore pull hard against it to go the other."¹

It is this equability of temper that has contributed largely to the impression of coldness that one gets from much of Clough's poetry. There is in it neither violence of controversy nor depth of emotional experience. It is intellectual, balanced, and impeccable in taste. Like its author it burns with a clear, steady flame, but never blazes fiercely. To one who reads Clough's later letters it becomes evident that his chosen medium might well have been prose. He was a moralist, a thinker, a philosopher, rather than a great poet. He was temperamentally more fit for a pulpit than for Parnassus.

In this day of controversy between Liberal and Fundamentalist, between interpreter and literalist, between Genesis

¹ *The Prose Remains of Arthur Hugh Clough with a Selection from His Letters and a Memoir.* London, 1888, pp. 420-421.

and Evolution, it is not unprofitable to turn to the letters Clough wrote when the intellectual world was disturbed by the conclusions of Biblical scholarship in the early nineteenth century.

In 1829, Henry Hart Milman had published his *History of the Jews*, in which he suggested a natural explanation of supposedly supernatural incidents in the Old Testament. For instance, he offered the suggestion that the angel destroying Sennacherib's army was a pestilential wind, and that Sodom and Gomorrah were burned naturally because they were built on bituminous soil. The story of the sun and moon being obedient to Joshua, Milman explained as poetry. The *Bete Noire* of the orthodox during this period, however, was the German Strauss, who published the first volume of his *Leben Jesu* in 1834 and the whole work in the following year. This work was a powerful attack upon the supernatural in Christianity. Strauss attacked even the historicity of Christ. Yet as he says in his preface; "The author is aware that the essence of the Christian faith is perfectly independent of his criticism. The supernatural birth of Christ, his miracles, his resurrection and ascension, remain eternal truths, whatever doubts may be cast on their reality as historical facts."² This point of view is significant as being closely akin to Clough's.

Like many of his contemporaries, Clough became aware of discrepancies between the findings of science and the accepted sacred books of the Hebrews. Unlike the more shallow thinkers of his day, however, he saw beneath the surface of disputed texts and poetical interpretations a bed-rock of spiritual truth. "A great many intelligent and moral people," he writes in 1852, "think Christianity a bad religion. I don't, but I am not sure, as at present preached, it is quite the truth. Meantime, 'the kingdom of heaven cometh not of observation,' but 'is in ourselves'." Five years before, he had written to his sister: "Do not think that doubts respecting the facts related in the Gospels need give us much trouble. Believing that in one way or other the thing is of God, we shall in the end know, perhaps, in what way and how far it was so. Trust in God's

² Storr, Vernon F., *The Development of English Theology in the Nineteenth Century 1800-1860*, London, 1913, p. 224.

justice and love, and belief in His commands as written in our conscience, stand unshaken, though Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, or even St. Paul, were to fall."

Yet many men were willing to call the writer of these words a heretic and an atheist. If it be a heretic to be an honest seeker after truth even if it involve the non-acceptance of man-made dogma, Clough was a heretic; but Luther, Calvin, Fox, and Wesley, so defined, were also heretics. Clough lacked the dynamic power necessary for leadership in the church; his insight and vision, however, link him with those in every age who have made religion a matter of the spirit rather than of a creed.

In 1838, Clough had written to his friend Gell in regard to the introduction by Arnold in London University of examinations in the *Gospels* and *Acts*: "It must have been a very grand thing to see him get up among all those people and declare that they must do something to show that they were Christians and that it was a Christian University." Eleven years later, having resigned his fellowship at Oxford because of a scruple and taken the Principalship of University Hall, Clough wrote to Thomas Arnold, son of the great headmaster: "As I say, I have no confidence in my tenure. For intolerance, O Tom, is not confined to the cloisters of Oxford, or the pews of the Establishment, but comes up, like the tender herb, *partout*, and is indeed in a manner indigenous in the heart of the family-man of the middle classes."

At times in his tone of disillusion he resembles Carlyle, although at first sight nothing could be more different than Carlyle's mysticism and Clough's ideal of work and service. Clough's comments upon mysticism, puzzling in themselves, become clear when considered in the light of his general thought. He defines mysticism as "letting feelings run on without thinking of the reality of their object, letting them out like water. . . ."³ This is certainly not a definition that would win the approval of a mystic. It would seem most applicable to the pseudo-mysticism of the romanticists of the early nineteenth century. When he discusses the matter more fully,

³ Clough, *Prose Remains*, p. 207.

however, it becomes evident that he is merely insisting upon the Carlylean creed of service as opposed to sentimental vaporizing without action. "Lay not," he says, "your hand upon the veil of the inner sanctuary, to try and lift it up; go, thou proselyte of the gate, and do thy service where it is permitted thee."⁴

Clough was not of the kindred of those who carry a perpetual onion in order to weep over the woes of humanity. His ideal was none the less altruistic for that: "It is," he remarks, "a good deal forgotten that we came into this world to do, not kindness to others, but our own duty to live soberly, righteously, and godly, not benevolently, philanthropically, and tenderheartedly. To earn his own bread honestly—in the strictest sense of the word *honestly*—to do plain straightforward work or business well and thoroughly, not with mere eye-service for the market, is really quite a sufficient task for the ordinary mortal."⁵

The spiritual advance of Clough from introspection to concern for social welfare was a natural one. He had always been interested in people. In school he was almost ludicrously anxious over the moral and spiritual health of his fellows. At Oxford he became more and more interested in questions of religious controversy, not merely as abstractions, but as realities affecting the lives of his contemporaries. When he found himself unable to subscribe to the creeds of the church, it was an easy step for him to become interested in human welfare. He did not know whether the soul is immortal. But he knew that he was alive and that many men were half living under a system of *laissez-faire*. In a characteristic manner he turned from the unknowable to the known, yet at the same time he maintained a deeply spiritual attitude toward things truly of the spirit.

A letter to the Reverend T. Burbidge, written at Oxford, in June, 1844, is one of the early bits of evidence as to the turn Clough's thought was taking: "Of course," he said, "I do not mean that if a labourer has at present his proper proportion for twelve hours' work, he should have the same sum for ten.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

But I do believe that he has not his proper proportion, that capital tyrannizes over labour, and that Government is bound to interfere to prevent such bullying; and I do believe, too, that in some way or other the problem now solved by universal competition or the devil-take-the hindmost may receive a more satisfactory solution. It is manifestly absurd that, to allow me to get my stockings a halfpenny a pair cheaper, the operative stocking-weaver should be forced to go barefoot. It is, surely, not wholly Utopian to look for some system which will apportion the due reward to the various sets of workmen, and evade this perpetual struggle for securing (each man to the exclusion of his neighbor) the whole market." On July 13, in the same year, he writes from Liverpool to his friend Gell, "I am considerably inclined just now to set to work at Political Economy, for the benefit of the rising generation, and to see if I cannot prove the Apostle of anti-laissez-faire."

Yet Clough did not become the Apostle of anti-laissez-faire. Perhaps the cloisters of Oxford and even the less cloistered halls of the University of London did not conduce to the production of apostles of a new industrial order. Perhaps his sense of *nothing too much* or perhaps even his habit of uneasy questioning prevented the development and amplification of his new ideas. He wrote only two or three articles on social theories, but these show him in harmony with the liberal thought of today.

In *A Consideration of Objections Against the Retrenchment Association at Oxford During the Irish Famine in 1847*, Clough argues against the theory that those who possess may use their possession as they will. He says to the young men of Oxford, "let me advise you to hesitate ere you venture the question, May I not do what I like with my own? ere you meddle with such edge-tools as the subject of property. Someone, I fear, might be found to look up your title-deeds, and to quote inconvenient Scriptures." He remarks later that, "It is of course utterly foreign to my meaning to do anything but find a secure basis for the rights of property; to impugn them were idle."⁸

Clough was not a Radical; if he had been, perhaps he would

⁸ Clough, *op. cit.*, p. 292

have accomplished more spectacular results. By nature he was a Liberal, a man of enlightened mind moving in advance of his fellows, yet restrained from precipitate action by the influence of tradition and reason. In his "Extracts from a Review of a Work entitled 'Considerations on some Recent Social Theories,'" he says: "The crying evil, as it appears to us, of the present system of unrestricted competition, is not so much the distress of the workmen or the extreme slovenliness and badness of their work. The joy and satisfaction of making really good things is destroyed by the criminal eagerness to make them to suit the market. So far as coöperative societies or guilds would remove this evil, they would be of great use. But let it not be forgotten that the object of human society is not the mere 'culinary' one of securing equal apportionments of meat and drink to all its members. Men combine for some higher object; and to that higher object it is, in their social capacity, the *privilege* and real happiness of individuals to sacrifice themselves. The highest political watchword is not Liberty, Equality, nor yet Solidarity, but *Service*."⁷

In these words Clough expresses a sentiment that, common enough at the present day, marks the culmination of his development as an ethical being. His experience had not been unusual. Many another man, reared in Orthodoxy and brought face to face with modern science, has come to a blank wall in theology but has been led to a fundamental conception of life by his realization of his unity with the group. Clough was always interested in people; they liked him for his wholeheartedness, for his honesty of mind. When he was at Rugby his devotion to the school prevented his being a prig; when he was a man his love of humanity saving him from despair, made possible the lines,

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light,
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright.

In 1853, Clough wrote from Cambridge, Massachusetts: "Are you aware that life is very like a railway? One gets into

⁷ Clough, *op. cit.*, pp. 410-411.

deep cuttings and long dark tunnels, where one sees nothing and hears twice as much noise as usual, and one can't read, and one shuts up the window, and waits, and then it all comes clear again. Only in life it sometimes feels as if one had to dig the tunnel as one goes along, all new for oneself. Go straight on, however, and one's sure to come out into a new country, on the other side the hills, sunny and bright. There's an apologue for you!"

It would be difficult to find a better summary of Clough's own experience than this passage, even through the last sentence. He had found life difficult and bewildering; he had failed to find in the beliefs that have comforted thousands, adequate food for his mind and spirit. But at last he had come out of the tunnel into sight of the sunlit countryside. And, having ended with a sentiment that must have sounded sugary to him, he could not help being a bit self-conscious about it.

Clough was not an isolated figure. He was a part of the questioning, yet hoping and doubting nineteenth century, a century as materialistic as our own, in which Newman, Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold, Darwin and Huxley were in their various ways the "Liberals of the Future." Of these, Clough was most nearly akin to Arnold; like him a man of keen intellect and religious spirit, puzzled by the uncertainties of his time.

The Charleston Commercial Convention of 1854

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Public opinion in the South in the decade just prior to the War of Secession was marked by a growing consciousness of the individuality of the South as a section within the Union; a conviction, which almost amounted to an obsession, that this highly cherished individuality was in danger of being swallowed up in the process of nationalization which had become the political ideal of another section; and a determination to resist absorption into the new nation which was to be presided over by the capitalistic North. How to effect this determination engrossed the public mind from the unsatisfactory "Compromise" in 1850 to the secession of South Carolina in 1860. One plan, of the several which were tried, sought to accomplish a thorough-going economic regeneration of the South in order to bring about an end of her commercial vassalage to the North. "I would have the South issue a declaration of industrial independence," said Albert Pike in 1854. By diverting some of her energy and capital from agriculture to manufacturing, commerce, etc., by diversifying her efforts, the South would become sufficient unto herself economically and would thereby shut out those influences which were undermining her institutions. In short, there need be no disunion—no political secession—as the hot-heads sometimes contemplated—for the same results might be obtained by this economic independence. Thus was "the right of self-determination" to be invoked before its day, but under circumstances not vastly at variance with those which actually called the doctrine into practice. That this effort was abortive makes it none the less interesting.

The means by which this regeneration was to be accomplished were discussed at length in a series of "commercial" conventions which were held annually, or more often, from 1852 to 1859 in the larger southern cities, and which were attended, with more or less regularity, by representatives of all

the southern and southwestern states.¹ Avowedly non-political in their purposes, these gatherings aimed to study the economic problems of the South and to consider suitable remedies. Politics were to some extent excluded from their proceedings at first, but gradually this subject crept in until it dominated at the last two gatherings. The first convention met in New Orleans in 1852. Others followed at Baltimore, later the same year; Memphis, 1853; Charleston, 1854; New Orleans, 1855; Richmond, 1856;² Savannah, 1856; Knoxville, 1857; Montgomery, 1858; and Vicksburg, 1859.³ Their continuity was never established by formal act; but in practice they were annual sessions of the same body, for each meeting provided for its successor and committees were, without variation, appointed at one convention to report at the next. Since the questions discussed varied little, it is possible to get an idea of the character of the movement by examining the proceedings of one of the more typical assemblages. The convention which met in Charleston in 1854 is perhaps the best suited to the purpose.

April 10, 1854, had been fixed at Memphis as the day for the opening of the next convention. Several weeks before that date the press of the South began to herald the event. The general tone was one of optimism. "The Convention at Charleston is one act in the drama which is to be played out in America, and that is an extensive and thorough revolution in the material condition of the South. . . . It will indeed be a southern convention. There will be no half and half opinions—no timid policy, no surrender of principle or independence there . . .," wrote the editor of the *Baltimore Evening Times*⁴ in an article urging the coöperation of Baltimore. The *American* of the same city confidently predicted "that it will be the largest and most influential assemblage that the commercial interests of the South have yet called together, and that its action, as developed by its proceedings and the speeches of its delegates, will be practical, liberal, and progressive. . . . The province of the approaching convention, as we understand

¹For the genesis of the convention idea see R. R. Russell, *Economic Aspects of Southern Sectionalism, 1840-1861*, ch. V.

²Two conventions met in both 1852 and 1856.

³For an account of the proceedings see contemporary issues of *DeBow's Review*.

⁴Quoted in the *Charleston Courier*, April 5, 1854.

it, will be to give unity and direction to this southern sentiment of which it (the convention) is the recognized organ."⁵ The Charleston papers played up the approaching gathering with characteristic zeal for the interests of their community. At the same time, however, there was manifested some opposition to the movement. *The Charleston Mercury*⁶ took pains to refute a charge of the *Washington Star* "that under cover of commercial purposes, the real intent of the approaching convention was political"; admitting, however, that there might be men "who would be glad to pervert it to political purposes." "The convention will apply itself to questions of commerce, industry, and internal improvements," continues the editor, "and at the proper intervals the convention will eat and sleep, without incurring the perils of indigestion and nightmare from the introduction of politics."

Two days before April 10th, the delegates began to arrive. Charleston was agog with interest. It was to be a gala occasion as well as a time for sober business discussion. For weeks the committee on entertainment had been making its plans. There was to be a grand ball, a sumptuous banquet, and a regatta and trip on the green waters of Charleston harbor. A Spanish dancer was engaged to appear at the Histrionic Theatre, other entertainments were planned for the Charleston Theatre, and the Philharmonic Association had promised a concert. Hotels and inns were notified to be in readiness, and the people of the city were urged to open their homes to "the immense concourse about to gather." The visitors were expected to bring their wives and preparations were made accordingly. Charleston would outdo its own reputation for hospitality. Thus did men set the scenes for a "commercial" convention in the roseate days of the antebellum South.⁷

The number of delegates who came sufficiently justified the elaborate preparations. The official lists give the names of 889, a figure which might safely be increased by 50, since many persons attended who did not register.⁸ Of the southern states

⁵ *Baltimore American*, April 7, 1854.

⁶ April 5, 1854.

⁷ Such details are to be found in the *Charleston Courier*, beginning the first week in April.

⁸ *Journal of the Proceedings of the Commercial Convention of the Southern and Southwestern States*, pp. 3-7.

Maryland sent 23, Virginia 101, North Carolina 37, South Carolina 367, Georgia 112, Florida 10, Alabama 25, Mississippi 7, Tennessee 186, Kentucky 8, Missouri 2, Arkansas 1, Louisiana 7, and Texas 3.⁹ Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and the District of Columbia had been invited to send representatives. Indiana sent one delegate, who took no active part in the proceedings; and letters of advice were sent from Cincinnati where a busy season prevented the delegation, which had been appointed, from attending. Apparently Illinois and the District of Columbia took no action. It was frequently emphasized that the convention was western as well as southern, and this the proceedings affirm in spite of the comparatively small representation from the western states. In the appointment of delegates no uniform method seems to have been followed. The size of the delegations being unrestricted, any prominent man willing to bear the expense of the journey might secure a seat in the convention through his state governor, the mayor or council of his city, or perhaps through an agricultural association or a chamber of commerce. The delegates seem to have come largely from the professional, planter, and merchant classes. Young lawyers with reputations to establish, newspaper men in search of copy, and railroad promoters with interests to lobby, were present in goodly numbers. Such was the assemblage which Mayor T. L. Hutchinson, of Charleston, called to order at eleven o'clock on the morning of April 10, 1854.

Organization was speedily accomplished. Senator William C. Dawson, of Georgia, who had presided at both Baltimore and Memphis, was again elected president. The rules of the National House of Representatives were adopted, and a general committee on resolutions, consisting of three delegates from each state, was appointed. Voting was to be by states, each state having one vote.

In a few words the president outlined the purpose of the meeting. His tone was distinctly conservative. "I consider the convention now convened as representing the great interests of an immense section of this country—interests which should not conflict with those of any other portion, as we do not array

⁹ It is to be noted that the border states were well represented in the convention whereas their interest in the later ones lagged considerably.

ourselves in antagonism to any part of the Union in seeking the commercial elevation of the South. The great object which we all have in view, is to unite, to harmonize, to converse and interchange friendly sentiments and opinions with each other; then to turn our eyes to the glorious country we now inhabit, to consider its vast resources, and their limited development, and then, as patriots, to ask ourselves: 'Does not this great section require of us to unite energetically all the powers we have to develop them?'" He would suggest for chief consideration such questions as a Pacific Railway, a railroad across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, and direct trade with Europe and South America. Personally he favored internal improvements by the Federal government, but he realized that there might be some difference of opinion on this score. Southern education, manufacturing, and mining should also have their consideration. In matters of this kind, he concluded, the destiny of the Southland lay.

As it turned out the Pacific Railway project claimed the largest share of the time and interest of the convention. In this connection there appeared a champion who deserves more than passing notice. He was at once the most picturesque, influential, and eloquent man in the entire assemblage. This was none other than Albert Pike, who came as a delegate from Arkansas. Born in Massachusetts, according to his own story, he had gone into the Southwest before attaining his majority. He had roamed the plains, fought the Indians, and practiced law. To his fellow delegates Pike was known as the "Poet-statesman." He was a man with "western characteristics,"—confidence, bigness, and bluff. His scheme for the construction of a railroad to the Pacific along a southern route, which proved to be chimerical, was in the end accepted by the convention.

Altogether, five plans for the construction of the proposed Pacific Railway were submitted. The leading question and chief ground for difference was, Who shall build this road? With reference to this point the proposals may be divided into two groups: that favoring construction either directly or indirectly by the Federal government, and that urging construc-

tion by some other agency. The Tennessee,¹⁰ Mississippi,¹¹ and Missouri¹² plans belong to the first; the Arkansas¹³ plan to the second. The Kentucky¹⁴ plan, though non-committal on this score, was defended in such terms by its sponsor that it may be placed in the second group also. These five proposals were placed before the convention on the first and second days. Four were referred to the general committee without debate, but the Tennessee resolutions were tabled temporarily. On the third day these were called up and the first debate on the question ensued. These resolutions were substantially as follows: The convention is of the opinion that a transcontinental railroad is of the "greatest national importance." Since it is a "measure eminently national in its character, and beyond the ability of the states or individuals to construct, it is . . . the duty of the Federal government to promote this great national enterprise, by all the measures within its powers, not inconsistent with the constitution of the United States." As it is well known that the best route lies through the Mesilla Valley, now a part of Mexico, "this convention would most respectfully suggest to the President of the United States that he cause such negotiations to be instituted between the two governments as may secure to this country the right to construct a road along the route indicated." Besides describing more definitely the proposed route, virtually the same as that mentioned above, and specifying construction by means of congressional land grants, the Missouri and Mississippi plans added nothing to this idea. The combination represented the view on internal improvements of the southern Whigs, who constituted an influential element in the convention.

The debate was opened by General Leslie Combs, a politician of Kentucky, and a veteran of the War of 1812, who opposed government construction. He was of the opinion that more than one Pacific railway might be profitably operated. The Federal government should not be asked for aid, but the people of the South should put their shoulders to the wheel,

¹⁰ Offered by Senator James C. Jones, *Proceedings*, p. 32.

¹¹ Offered by N. D. Coleman, *Proceedings*, p. 34.

¹² Offered by W. G. Blackwood, *Proceedings*, p. 53.

¹³ Offered by Albert Pike, *Proceedings*, pp. 36-39.

¹⁴ Offered by Leslie Combs, *Proceedings*, p. 36.

and by so doing they could make a railroad to Passo del Norte. The legislature of Texas had, at its last session, passed a law, he pointed out, giving twenty sections per mile for a road to be constructed very nearly on the thirty-second parallel, which was a greater bounty than any other state could give. In adopting that line he expected to accomplish two objects—to run through the center of the slave territory, and to have the benefit of the twenty sections per mile donated by the state of Texas. From Passo del Norte he believed the best route was through a portion of northern Mexico. A treaty (the Gadsden Purchase) to acquire possession of the necessary territory was then before the national Senate, and he trusted that it would be speedily ratified. By whom this section of the road was to be built, the speaker did not explain. He concluded by alluding to a rumor that the North had raised \$55,000,000 in England to build a transcontinental railway; therefore the South should be up and doing.

The next speaker was Pike, who also opposed the Tennessee plan. His remarks were highly colored by a section-consciousness, but there was no disunion sentiment. "I love my country," he said, "and I will never give up the inestimable privilege of planting my foot, as an American, upon the battle ground of Bunker's Hill." He believed that the South was forgetting the West, and while she was neglecting this section the North was populating it with their own colonists. By providing that all foreign immigrants, who settled in some of the western territories, should have the suffrage without even declaring their intentions to become citizens; by fostering a homestead bill, which had already passed the House of Representatives; and by proposing the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, the North was effecting its purpose. It would not be long before twenty members of Congress would represent the foreign vote, and with this continued increase in foreign and northern influence, was it not obvious that the prospect of the South ever getting the Pacific Railroad was put farther and farther off every year? He believed that the northern vote in the Senate would be cast against the Gadsden Treaty. It was well understood in Washington that the Federal government would not construct a rail-

way by the southern route, therefore, as the previous speaker had urged, the South must do it. He would therefore propose that the southern states should confederate together, not by any unlawful confederation, but in a legal union, for the purpose of building with their own funds this great southern highway to the Pacific, dealing as independent states, negotiating, if need be, with Mexico for the land, asking no favors from the northern states. These sentiments were greeted with demonstrations of approval from some of the delegates and from the galleries where visitors and ladies were seated.

Several speakers followed. As Pike and Combs had represented the views of the strict-constructionists, Senator James C. Jones, of Tennessee, expressed the latitudinarian views of the Whigs. He pointed out how powers for such an undertaking on the part of the Federal government might be found in the Constitution. Lieutenant M. F. Maury, who had been made chairman of the general committee, next stressed the military importance of such a railroad. He thought that the war powers of Congress gave the Federal government the right to undertake the project, and furthermore he favored construction by the army. Pike closed the debate of the day, replying briefly to Senator Jones. The Tennessee resolutions were then referred to the general committee.

The question was allowed to slumber until the fifth day when resolutions were reported by the general committee. These combined the important features of the Kentucky (Combs) and Arkansas (Pike) plans. They emphasized the following ideas: (1) the vital needs of "one or more" trans-continental railways; (2) the southern route should begin at suitable points on the Mississippi river between St. Louis and New Orleans, should concentrate at some point in Texas on or near the thirty-second parallel, following the route already designated by the legislature of Texas to the Rio Grande, and should run thence to the Pacific ocean or the Gulf of California; (3) the United States Senate should ratify the Gadsden Treaty; (4) to construct the road, the Virginia legislature should be called upon to incorporate a Southern Pacific Railroad Company; of which corporation the several states and

several cities and railroad companies therein, together with other private corporations, individuals, and the Creek, Choctaw, and Cherokee nations west of the Mississippi, should be invited to be incorporators, the governing directory to be composed of an equal number from each state; (5) a committee of one from each state represented in the convention should be appointed to draft a charter and to present it to the respective state legislatures and the general councils of the several Indian nations, praying the latter at the same time to grant rights of way through their lands; (6) the company should be given the power to negotiate with Mexico for a right of way through its territory, extending to that country certain privileges on the proposed railway.

The first and second resolutions were adopted without opposition, but the third occasioned a lengthy debate. In the course of this, General James Gadsden, who was spending a month in Charleston after returning from his mission to Mexico, defended the treaty which he had recently arranged with the Mexican government. He hinted at a conspiracy being engineered by the wily Seward to sacrifice the interests of the South in the Mexican boundary dispute by surrendering to that country the territory desired for the Southern Pacific. Should the treaty fail, he saw no reason why the Pike plan of acquiring a route should not be employed. In spite of this, however, the opposition prevailed and the resolution was withdrawn.

The remaining resolutions were not reached until the last day of the convention; then they were severely attacked.¹⁵ The idea was characterized as untimely, "visionary, utterly impracticable, and unmanageable in its details." Several members balked at the suggestion of a confederation of states with the power of negotiating with foreign countries. "The states, in their sovereign capacities, have surrendered this power," said N. D. Coleman, of Mississippi, "and therefore should not attempt to create a corporation of southern states for such a purpose."¹⁶ Others feared that the project would become a party issue and would only add fuel to the burning questions

¹⁵ *Proceedings*, p. 131-153.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

which were causing division in the South.¹⁷ Lieutenant Maury thought that the plan would give the company besides a "tremendous money power a hideous feature of military power also."¹⁸ The president left the chair to voice his opposition. The debate waxed warm. A northern paper¹⁹ stated that the Virginia delegation had seceded from the convention, but such was not the case. Finally, when the opponents had broken their best lances, the imperturbable Pike rose to the defense of his plan. The rules were suspended to allow him adequate time for the purpose.

First he charged the opposition with selfish motives. "These differences are our rivalries and our jealousies," he said, "difficulties as to the different points on the Mississippi river for a terminus; difficulties in regard to different notions concerning politics. Of course, no man expects that we will all unite. But in setting forth these difficulties, you tell the North that we are weak, and why should we lay our whole secret open to them?" With consummate cleverness he met each objection of his opponents, explaining every detail of his scheme. In answer to the argument that in time of war with Mexico that country would seize the portion of the road within its limits, he replied: "In the greatest emergency, ever likely to arise under the circumstances, I could take the road with 3,000 Creeks and Choc-taws and keep it forever." When finally he took his seat, it was obvious that he had won for his cause. The applause was prolonged and enthusiastic, and the speaker was presented with a bouquet from the "Pee Dee Ladies." The question was put to a vote immediately, and unanimously adopted after a motion to invite California to take stock in the company had been favorably acted upon.

Nor did the convention halt on the subject of railroads with these resolutions. But the debate on all other propositions showed the same division along party lines, the Whigs favoring government aid and the Democrats opposing it. Again the views of the latter were, in the main, upheld in the general vote. Resolutions defending the constitutionality of the alternate-

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

¹⁹ Three New York papers had correspondents present.

section system of granting public lands to railway companies and urging southern congressmen to support such a policy were easily defeated by the strict-constructionists. A measure advocating "the enactment of a general law, giving the different states, in which the public lands lie, the right of pre-emption and purchase of all, or any, of the lands on the line of any railroad sanctioned by the legislatures of such states, to the breadth of six miles on each side of every such road, at reduced prices, graduated in proportion to the time during which such lands may have been in the market, and upon credit" met the same fate. A resolution requesting southern congressmen to use their efforts to secure a reduction of the duty on railroad iron was passed after considerable debate and some amendment. Other measures which gained the support of the convention contained the following provisions: (1) all southern railways should be promoted by every means within the power of the states or individuals; (2) gratification at the progress being made toward linking the Mississippi valley with the South Atlantic and Gulf ports; (3) the great value of railroads in the development of the natural resources of the South; and (4) the several states should not hesitate to grant aid to railways under construction within their limits.

Next to railroads the subject of foreign commerce claimed the largest share of the attention of the "conventioners." Free trade and direct interchange of products with Europe were the general panaceas for the drooping commerce of the South. In the interest of the former a resolution was adopted requesting southern congressmen to use their efforts to secure the arrangement of treaties with foreign countries providing for the admission of their respective products at reduced rates of duty. On the score of free trade the convention went no further, in deference, perhaps, to the presence of an active pro-tariff element.

On the question of direct trade more definite action was taken. Resolutions were passed recommending the establishment of steamship lines between southern ports and continental Europe and the opening up of the Amazon valley to southern commerce. With respect to the former of these two objects

there was read a letter²⁰ from J. J. Siebels, United States Charge d'Affaires at Brussels. This presented evidence to show that the "tribute" being annually paid by southern merchants for transshipment of their products from English ports to the continent was enormous. Antwerp was suggested as the best port of entry for southern trade with Europe. The need of a southern commercial marine was ably argued in a report submitted by George A. Trenholm, a merchant of Charleston. As a result of this discussion a number of minor resolutions were referred to the general committee which crystallized them into the following propositions: (1) southern states having a seaport should encourage the establishment of direct trade with Europe, "either by exempting from taxes, for a limited time, the goods imported, or by allowing the importers an equivalent drawback or bounty, or by such other mode as to the legislatures of the several states may seem best;" and (2) a committee of two from each seaport represented in the convention should inquire into the "expediency of establishing a line of steamships between one or more of said seaports and a certain port or ports of Europe," and southern congressmen should use their efforts to secure mail contracts for such a line. These were adopted.

Among the resolutions reported by the general committee on the third day was the following: "Resolved, That the senators and representatives in Congress, from the states represented in this convention, be requested to urge upon Congress the importance of the following measure: To send one or two small naval steamers up the Amazon River for the purpose of exploring the tributaries of that river, which the states owning them have declared to be free to the navigation and commerce of the whole world." The following day Lieutenant W. L. Herndon, a naval officer who, with Lieutenant Lardner Gibbons (also present), had previously led an exploring expedition up the Amazon, moved to amend the resolution by adding these words: "and that the government of Brazil be requested to permit those vessels to make explorations and surveys on the shores of the Amazon belonging to that nation." The matter attracted little attention at the time, and the resolution as

²⁰ *Proceedings*, pp. 85-90.

amended was promptly adopted. The next day, however, James Lyons, of Virginia, vigorously attacked Herndon's amendment. He saw in it a recommendation of "open, outright, daring filibustering upon a neighboring nation." He hoped that portion would be stricken out. In reply, Lieutenant Maury defended the amendment at considerable length. He spoke of the plan to open the Amazon to the commerce of the world as one of the express objects of the Memphis convention of 1845. He admitted that the Herndon expedition had been styled a filibustering enterprize by the monarchical party in Brazil. The liberal party in that country, on the other hand, favored the project, and he for one thought that this faction should be encouraged. As a result of the sentiments expressed at Memphis, Bolivia and Equador had proclaimed for the navigable tributaries of the Amazon within their limits the freedom of the seas and had invited the people of all friendly nations to come there and occupy their lands. In view of this action Brazil had no right under international law to close the mouth of the Amazon. The convention thereupon refused to reconsider the matter.

On the question of internal improvements party lines again threatened to disturb the harmony of the convention, but tranquility was maintained by another surrender on the part of the Whigs. The cause of this difference was a resolution reported by the general committee asking Congress to make appropriations for the improvement of harbors and navigable rivers in the southern states. A motion to strike out completely was defeated by a vote of 10 to 4. Two substitutes modifying the language of the original resolution were suggested, but adjournment for the day prevented consideration of them. The next morning the debate was renewed. Governor Chapman, of Alabama, stated that such differences would bring the convention movement to an end, at least his state would secede if the issue was pushed. L. N. Whittle, of Georgia, said that as a Whig he favored the resolution, but he did not care to press the matter in the face of the opposition. At this point Maury attempted to withdraw the offending measure, but he was prevented by cries of "No, No!" and "Vote, Vote!" After some

further discussion, however, he was given his way. A resolution advocating the appropriation of a sum to enlarge the Louisville and Portland Canal, which had been recently purchased by the Federal government, was likewise defeated.

Resolutions encouraging southern manufacturing and mining found ready consideration in the convention. One of these asserting that slave labor could profitably be employed in manufacturing establishments and that southern capital should be diverted from cotton producing to this purpose, was lost in the committee. That manufacturing could be successfully carried on in the South was supported in a paper read by A. W. Putnam, of Tennessee, which called attention to the rapid development of the iron industry in his own state. Sentiment on the subject was finally crystallized into the following propositions: (1) While agriculture was the predominant pursuit of the people of the South, still their interests would be greatly furthered by the employment of capital in manufacturing and mining enterprises; (2) a committee of three from each state represented in the convention should make a survey of the manufacturing, mining, milling, and lumbering activities of the southern states and report their findings to the next convention and to the legislatures of the various states; (3) another committee should "consider and report upon the propriety and expediency of adopting some plan for promoting southern and western manufacturers and mining operations."

A host of minor matters claimed the remainder of the time of the convention. These further illustrate the methods by which the "conventioners" hoped to achieve southern independence within the Union. One dealt with education. The subject was called to the attention of the delegates by special articles in the Charleston press. The resolutions were significant: (1) gratification at the progress in education in the South; (2) deprecation of the practice of sending southern youth to northern schools, a practice which was "fraught with peril to our sacred interests"; (3) establishment of normal schools; (4) encouragement of the writing of textbooks by southern scholars by means of state bounties; (5) the appointment of a committee to investigate the book trade of the South;

(6) discrimination on the part of school boards in the appointment of southern teachers; and (7) the need of patronizing such southern journals as *The Southern Quarterly Review*, *The Self-Instructor*, *DeBow's Review*, and *The Southern Literary Messenger*.

Slavery was touched only indirectly. One resolution providing for a committee to inquire into the relative advantages of slave and free white labor on railroad and internal improvement enterprizes, did not get beyond the general committee. Another recommending that southern states having a seaport take steps to protect slave property against abduction by sea, passed without explanatory debate. An Alabama delegate attempted to put the convention on record as favoring the acquisition of Cuba "by means consistent with honor and the law of nations," but was unsuccessful. The southern states were urged to conduct geological surveys of their territories. Fairs were recommended as a satisfactory means of promoting agricultural interests. And finally, there was one resolution, more interesting than important, which advocated that the United States offer mediation to Russia, Turkey, England, and France, who were then on the brink of the Crimean War.

On Saturday, April 15, after being in session six days, the convention adjourned. It had been decided to meet in New Orleans in the following January. We may well conclude that the people of Charleston were right sorry to see their guests depart. It had been a gay week of pleasure and frolic, as well as one of great moment, as some thought, for the future of the business interests of the South.

The tone of the press comment in the South was one of frank disappointment; in the North, of amused contempt. *The Cincinnati Gazette*,²¹ which had strongly favored the convention at first, complained that "we have examined their published proceedings and have come to the conclusion that the South is more given to political speculations than to those of a commercial character. There was no lack of resolutions, and of eloquent speeches in the convention, and we have no doubt that the beauty of Charleston shone in glorious splendor and

²¹ April 21, 1854.

can bear a favorable comparison with the rest of womankind, and that the dinners were good, the wine of the first quality, and the cruise in the harbor very delightful, but these are not the means by which to make railroads or to build ships. . . . " *The Baltimore American*²² felt that "its proceedings will tend to amuse the North rather than benefit the South." *Hunt's Merchant Magazine*,²³ which in the beginning eagerly solicited accounts of the proceedings, apparently decided to ignore the event. *The New York Tribune*²⁴ openly ridiculed the whole affair, making much of the controversy which arose in the convention over the advisability of admitting the reporters of the three New York papers to the press gallery. "Well, the convention has met and has parted," ran one article, "has twaddled about capital and trade and progress, and has sworn a new fealty to slavery, and poverty, and weakness, and deterioration. So they will go on. They will meet, and meet, and meet—and Norfolk and Charleston will remain villages; and the 40,000 people just shown by the Virginia journals to exist in that state ignorant of reading and writing will increase; and the people of small means who must live by labor, will continue to desert the soil of slavery for that of liberty; and the 400,000 immigrants will pour into the Northwest and avoid the South more and more; and the trade of the Northwest and East will augment along with their arts and manufactures, and polish and civilization."

We may say without hesitancy that the keynote of this convention and of others in the series, at least until 1856, was section-consciousness—not disunion, for, on the contrary, every move was directed toward creating conditions under which the South might remain within the Union. The relief measures proposed were aggressive—but aggressive in the same sense that two sections of this country today fight each other in commercial rivalry; only the rivalry then was more deep-rooted, more bitter than now. The South would protect its sacred institutions, its individuality as a section within the Union, by means of an economic regeneration. There would, perhaps,

²² April 15, 1854.

²³ *Proceedings*, p. 104.

²⁴ April 19, 1854.

have been more intensity in this aggression had it not been that the South was divided politically. Repeatedly was the sting removed from the resolution of some fire-eater by the conservative element before it was allowed to receive official sanction. Especially true was this in the case of a report²⁵ by a committee on federal relations which was completely suppressed. It was this same spirit of moderation which prevented the passage of resolutions favoring the re-opening of the African Slave Trade until the last convention of the series. As the South approached political unity, politics encroached more and more into the deliberations of these commercial conventions. They were, after all, however, a part of the preface to the approaching and "irrepressible conflict." If they did not succeed in their avowed purpose, they served admirably to call attention to those conditions which were responsible for the economic backwardness of the South.

²⁵ *Proceedings*, p. 111.

Book Reviews

GREAT BRITAIN AND THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR. By Ephraim Douglas Adams. New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1925. 2 vols., 307, 340 pp.

These volumes are timely as well as informing. It is well indeed in this day when the nature and course of European international relations in the nineteenth century are being examined anew to have a fresh and minute presentation of a critical period in the relations of the United States and Great Britain. The distinctive feature of Professor Adams's work is that it is based on manuscript as well as printed material, the author having attained access to the archives of the British Foreign Office while collaborating with the late Charles Francis Adams in the preparation of a biography of Charles Francis Adams, Sr., which is as yet unpublished. The result is a contribution to diplomatic history unusually authoritative.

The underlying theme of the book is the reaction of British public opinion to the Civil War and its problems. To this end a careful examination has been made of the attitude of the newspapers and the conclusions therefrom are such as to correct traditional American concepts. Thus in 1860 the trend of the press was in favor of the North. Although after military operations began the *Times* reversed its position, there were always at least a dozen leading journals that supported the Union cause, others were neutral, and the Confederacy found sympathy with a minority. However one vital question is not raised or answered—the motivation of the policies of the press, the relation of newspapers to certain groups of people and to various factions in the society and politics of the day. Consequently just what kind of public opinion they reflected, we are not told.

The discussion of official diplomatic relations is illuminating. On the whole it is favorable to British policy. Thus the Proclamation of Neutrality, we are told, was "the natural, direct, and prompt notification to British subjects required in the presence of de facto war." Likewise the conclusion regarding Lord John Russel and the Laird Rams is that Russell waited

for legal support before seizure, but when that was not forthcoming he acted on his own initiative, although British law required evidence before seizure. Somehow any vital relationship between public opinion and governmental policy seems not to have existed. Government was not as sensitive to public clamor as it is today, and public clamor was not as well organized. War between America and Britain was prevented by the activity of a few individuals, not by public opinion.

On one aspect of British American relations which the latest school of historians emphasizes, no light is thrown—that of commercial and financial relationships. To what extent did the Civil War influence the flow of capital across the Atlantic? Professor Adams is evidently not one of the economic interpreters of history; indeed he rejects the theory recently presented that the flow of American wheat to England offset British losses due to the cotton famine. Yet it is singular, as he points out, that only one member of Parliament from the Lancashire District criticized the policy of neutrality. Was this possibly due to the fact that the manufacturers sold their stocks of goods at an advance and saved labor costs by closing the mills?

Finally, emphasis is also laid on the influence of the Civil War on the revival of political dissent in England. Out of war-time politics arose the issue of the further extension of suffrage, and the Reform Bill of 1867 was the outcome. This story is told, of course, from the angle of John Bright and formal political agitation. But what ferment was at work in the ranks of organized labor? This question has yet to be clarified.

The weakness of these volumes, excellent as they are, lies in the author's aloofness, in his scholarly detachment. This creates a certain lack of directness in his conclusions. One wishes that he had been a little more blunt now and then, at least a little more imaginative. But the book will stand as a landmark in the historiography of British-American relations.

W. K. B.

OUTLINES OF A PHILOSOPHY OF ART. By R. G. Collingwood. London: Oxford University Press, 1925. 104 pp.

Some of the best writing on æsthetics in our own language at the present time issues from a group of English scholars—E. A. Carritt, J. A. Smith, R. G. Collingwood—who acknowledge either entire or large indebtedness to Croce. This particular little contribution to the Crocean aftermath follows an excellent general philosophical treatise of Mr. Collingwood's, *Speculum Mentis*, and a recent significant paper on Plato's philosophy of art (*Mind*, xxxiv, 134, pp. 154-173). In the essay under consideration he attempts to state his general conception of art as imagination and to articulate the conception into its own natural and peculiar detail: the subordinate conceptions of the sublime and the comic, the antitheses of nature and art, formal art and naturalistic art, classical and romantic art, genius and taste, matter and form, notions like that of technique, distinctions between the various and so-called arts. The general definition of beauty is obviously Crocean, but so also is the insistence on the primitiveness of the æsthetic activity. "The birth of art has already taken place when a child covers a piece of paper with meaningless pencil scribbles. . . . A column of men on the march is an orchestra in which every instrument is a primitive drum" (pp. 68, 69). The same influence appears in the assertion that works of art are monads without windows, absolutely individual expressions of the imaginative faculty, and the assertion that art is indifferent as such to history or to fact. Collingwood differs from Croce, and for the better, I think, in his belief in æsthetic classifications. "If we call a work of art sublime, or idyllic, or lyrical, or romantic, or graceful, we mean to call attention to something in the character of the work itself, and what we say about it amounts to praise or blame of the artist as such. On the other hand, if we call it a seascape or a villanelle or a fugue we are attaching to it a predicate with no æsthetic significance whatever, and are therefore neither praising it nor blaming it" (p. 31). He draws a convincing analogy from the field of ethics when he notes that merely because we do not attach moral significance to such classifications of acts as labeling an instance of knocking a man

down or writing a check, we do not therefore infer that there are no moral distinctions which matter.

Though Croce has apparently meant most to Mr. Collingwood, Hegel has surely meant much. The dialectical movement beginning with the sublime as a positive illusion, the passage by antithesis to the comic as a negative illusion and the cancelling out of both illusions in the synthesis of beauty, and a similar dialectic embracing natural, formal, and imaginative art are unfortunately reminiscent of Hegelian logic at its worst and most abstract rather than illustrative of the concrete logic of Neo-Hegelianism. It is perhaps to be expected that an admirer of the author of *What is Living and What is Dead in the Philosophy of Hegel* would not make the best possible use of Hegel.

In an interesting note appended to the little volume Mr. Collingwood declares that only those thoroughly trained in philosophy and thoroughly trained in art are qualified to write on aesthetics. By training in art he means not the mere looking at pictures and listening to music, but conscientious attention to the technical problems either of music or painting. By training in philosophy he means general competence acquired through long, hard labor, not a smattering or polite interest, nor even an honest discipline narrow in range. The excellence of the book in hand would seem to be partly due to the authors' own fulfillment of these requirements. One is struck, for example, with the sophistication of such a remark as the following: "When all sense of key has disappeared because all the notes are wrong notes, one may get the new beauty of keyless sound" (p. 20).

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THAMYRIS, OR IS THERE A FUTURE FOR POETRY. By R. C. Trevelyan.
New York: E. P. Dutton & Company [1925]. vii + 89 pp.

TIMOTHEUS, OR THE FUTURE OF THE THEATRE. By Bonamy Dobrée.
New York: E. P. Dutton & Company [1925]. vii + 68 pp.

These two little books seem almost to have been meant to be contrasted. The subtitles are significant, one a question, the

other an assertion. One is a sober attempt, after reviewing the present state of affairs, to adumbrate the affairs that are to come, even to hint helpfully and cautiously how a better state may be achieved; the other is a light leap and a safe landing into the year 2100. Sacred and profane: solemnity and persiflage: an extension course lecture and a vaudeville skit. Perhaps I exaggerate, but there is no harm, for both books may be read at a sitting (and the exaggeration tested), *Thamyris with the salad*, *Timotheus between desert and coffee*. And while we smoke . . .

Mr. Trevelyan begins easefully with an apologue: how Satan shocked the hymning Heavenly Host by a bit of American free-verse—passes through an abbreviated treatise on versification to a suggestion that something may be gained by our future poets paying fuller attention to 'quantity' in their verse, not as a substitute for stress (as in mere classical imitations), but as an experiment in getting more than is customary out of the time values of words. But thoughtful technicians have already done this, as Mr. Trevelyan indirectly shows; and to go much further would be to produce learned rhythms, a delight to the scholar and confusion to the general reader. Continuing, Mr. Trevelyan tentatively prescribes lyrics on a larger scale than heretofore, perhaps in the manner of the Greek choric odes; or an experiment in genuine comic poetry, Rabelais in verse, as it were (for which all that is needed is a new Rabelais with a gift for metre); or perhaps a true poetic tragedy "alembicating tragic beauty from human misery and passion"; or a rebirth of narrative verse (though deprecating psychological subtleties, whereat Chaucer succeeded brilliantly, while Mr. E. A. Robinson has somehow not quite succeeded); or possibly even a new philosophic poetry. Yet what poet can by taking thought add one cubit to his poetic stature? It is not by such specifics as these that the patient may be cured. There is no known or knowable formula for the divine elixir; no gland-grafting or transfusion of ichor will rejuvenate the venerable Muse. What we need to ensure a future for poetry is merely new poets.

As a final word Mr. Trevelyan seriously forecasts that verse will continue to be written. Mr. Dobrée is bolder. He has

already seen our old-fashioned theatre discarded and a new National Theatre well organized, with its corps of integrated workers, where all the emotions are scientifically generated and purveyed with the utmost precision and effectiveness, whether for the cure of epidemic unhappiness or for the cultivation of a firm national piety at governmental crises. All which is managed in a great hyperboloid seat-lined pit, without stage and without actors. The process may be dimly conveyed to limited early nineteenth-century intelligences as analogous to our still undeveloped Clavilux, with complex attachments for including sound (sometimes even articulate sounds such as our present actors occasionally resort to) and odor along with form and color.

If this is not altogether comprehensible, pray turn to Mr. Dobrée's book, where you will find a little of Swift touched up with light Gallic brush-strokes. The satire may be sometimes farced, the wit sometimes flaccid, but the intention is plain.

To sum up: Guessing the future on the basis of the past is generally dull business. One is inclined to cry "Blind Thamyris!" at Mr. Trevelyan. Is not Mr. Dobrée's way a better way? to shake loose all trammels and let the imagination (or a near-substitute) soar off parabolically into the intense inane? Mr. Trevelyan by a rather less than magic-lantern projects the past upon a white curtain and asks: Is there a future behind? Mr. Dobrée gallantly rends the veil, even to the seventh filament, and cries: Lo!

Blind Thamyris indeed!!

P. F. B.

CELEBRITIES OF OUR TIME. By Herman Bernstein. New York: Joseph Lawten, [1925]. xiv., 347 pp.

This collection of interviews is of great interest to the reader who would like intimate personal glimpses into the life and opinions of the chief men of the last decades. The author has chosen the most characteristic of the hundreds of talks he has had with prominent individuals in various lands; and these he presents to us in an attractive readable volume. He has seen the war at close range; he has been in the company of the

apostles of peace and the leaders of unrest; he has wondered, as he tells us, "what will the young generation think of us when it grows up and sees the truth behind the war? What ideals will it have? What standard of morality? What respect for law and order? What sense of sympathy?"

For Tolstoi the writer has real affection. "The only man in Russia who dares to tell the truth, even to the Tsar, and is not punished for it," is introduced as a man of eighty but still in harness. The aged seer is asked about the future of his country; he replies that violence cannot improve social conditions. "The activity of revolutionists, like the deeds of violence committed by the Government, will not lead to any improvement in the life of our people. . . . The French Revolution produced Napoleon. The civil war produced the terrible Negro problem in America." When asked about his religious views, Tolstoi declared that "religion must be the highest form of love, or love is merely a word. All religions are based on love, but Christianity is based on the highest form of love." Meanwhile the basis is only in theory, but the world is growing ever more perfect.

In visiting Shaw's home, at Adelphia Terrace, Mr. Bernstein notes that the writer's own name is not there. There is a sign over the small gate on the first story, bearing the name of "Mrs. Bernard Shaw." The dramatist voices his indifference to visiting America. "There is nothing there that can interest me. When America will be a real American nation, when the American type becomes fixed, when the American's skin turns red and his forehead recedes, then it will be interesting to go to America." Shaw predicts the final end of international war; however, all countries should combine, and the first aggressor should be dealt with severely. It is as absurd to speak of our command of the sun and the moon as of our command of the sea. Approached on his own specialty, Shaw remarks that the large mass of the people would be driven away from the theatre by an intellectual drama. "The clerks, the hard-working people, like to see fine clothes and elegant manners and society life." Serious drama should be given in an endowed theatre.

Auguste Rodin is described as "seventy-one years young." (The interview is dated "1911"). Rodin "has not only marched

alone, but has made the multitudes, even his former enemies, march behind him." Though a Frenchman, Rodin is universal in his art and intensely admires the work of the ancient Greeks. "The art of sculpture was perfected by the Egyptians, the Assyrians, and the Greeks, who brought it to its highest point." To-day sculpture is approaching a crisis, since it is losing the best qualities of the art in the past and is divorcing itself from the characteristics of its period of perfection. It is a mistake to place works of sculpture in public museums: such pieces are mere fragments, and art, to be perfect, must be complete. Rodin believes that America has a future as an art centre; there is danger, however, that American art will become commercialized. "The commercial spirit . . . is the tomb-stone over the noblest strivings of the artists." Speaking of his own methods, Rodin avows that he is not a dreamer and that his temperament is even. "My sculpture is good because it is geometrically correct. . . . I admire nature and I find it so perfect that if God called me and asked me to suggest a change I would answer: 'All is perfect. Nothing could be changed.'" New schools of art, such as the "Futurists," are not schools; they are styles and fads devoid of any power. In other words, they are paradoxes.

Havelock Ellis does not think that women have any special aptitude for the arts, though they have produced some good novels. The field in which they really excel is social activity, which is more important than art. Too many people are devoting themselves to what they call art, as it is, notwithstanding our desires and struggles are already faithfully mirrored in art for the mass of humanity. The writers in America are not keeping pace with the progress of their country. One supreme artist has been produced in Poe, and other great authors in Whitman, Emerson, and Thoreau. "But the Americans are too busy to produce a real literature. You must not be too busy, you must have more dreamers if you would produce a literature of importance."

Bergson draws a distinction between mind and brain: it is a mistake to consider them identical. "The brain is only a province of the mind. The mind represents a country, and

. . . the work done by the country is immensely wider in scope than that done by the province." The brain may die: the mind goes on living. From this it may be concluded that the mind survives the body; at least there is a strong probability that it does. There is no difference of level between the male and female mind; women have not yet had the chance to produce philosophic work, but judging by the average aptitude men and women are equal.

Woodrow Wilson suffered disillusionment because he was such a great idealist. "His tragedy," says Mr. Bernstein, "lay in the fact that he was so far ahead of his time." Future generations will learn how to value the heritage of idealism which he bequeathed to the world. "There is one definite, concrete service which Woodrow Wilson rendered to the world and which will be remembered after most of the statesmen of to-day have passed away and are forgotten. It will be recorded by future historians among the greatest achievements of our age. It was Wilson who actually broke down the Hohenzollern dynasty and crushed Kaiserism. It was he who first dared raise his voice against the militarist autocracy of Germany when the other statesmen were silent. They never wanted the downfall of Kaiserism, they could not conceive that it was possible to overthrow it. Wilson directed the moral and physical forces of America against Kaiserism and crushed it." To say that the war president was a cold, unfeeling, thinking machine is to confess that one never knew him. His sense of humor and his deep sympathies for the suffering and oppressed made a strong appeal to Mr. Bernstein.

There are many other interviews of equal interest. I have arbitrarily chosen a few, with the confidence that I have given the reader the key to an enjoyable book.

EDGAR LEGARE PENNINGTON.

SOVEREIGN STATES AND SUITS BEFORE ARBITRAL TRIBUNALS AND COURTS OF JUSTICE. By James Brown Scott. New York City: New York University Press, 1925. x, 360 pp.

The appearance of this book marks another valuable contribution from one whose work in the field of international law is well known to every serious student of the subject. The

material contained in it was originally presented at New York University in 1924 as the James Stokes Lectures on Politics. The work has a timely interest by reason of the wide-spread discussion of the matters with which it deals. It also has a bearing upon the current question of participation by the United States in the Permanent Court of International Justice.

The purpose of the author is to deal with sovereign states, tribunals of arbitration, and courts of justice, not "in their larger aspects, but in certain limited relations." The viewpoint is distinctly that of the internationalist, although much of the discussion falls within the realm of American constitutional law and theory. The study covers the theory and practice of the American Supreme Court in suits involving states of the American Union. From this, certain comparisons are made and conclusions reached with reference to the practicability of subjecting sovereign states in the international sense of the jurisdiction of an international court of justice.

In his introductory lecture on "The Sovereign State of To-Day," Dr. Scott refers to the Bill of Rights adopted by the Virginia Convention on June 12, 1776, and observes that "this appears to be the first clear exposition of the principles upon which the modern state was founded." In his second lecture he endeavors to show that the American States became in 1776 "free and independent" states in the sense of international law. Ratification by Virginia of the treaties of alliance and commerce with France of 1778, and the neutrality proclamation of Massachusetts during the quarrel between New York and New Hampshire in 1784, are mentioned as acts of independent states. With reference to the method of settling disputes between these sovereign bodies, the author finds a close analogy between the development in America between 1781 and 1789 and that in the world at large between 1899 and 1922 (pp. 49-50).

The third lecture takes up different forms of amicable settlement which have been resorted to in international controversies. An examination is made of the theory of sovereign immunity as it is held to-day and as it has been applied by the States of the American Union. Renunciation of the right of sovereign immunity from suit is considered not unreasonable. For experi-

ence has shown that states of the American Union can safely sue one another in the Supreme Court without limitation.

The practice followed in the settlement of inter-colonial disputes by the Crown in Council is reviewed. Efforts toward settlement of inter-state disputes under the method provided in the Ninth Article of Confederation are summarized. The author then shows how the Supreme Court has exercised jurisdiction in suits between states under the Constitution, and how the States of the Union "parted with the exercise of one of the powers of sovereignty" by general agreement. Particularly marked is the "tentative, one might almost say timorous way in which the judges proceeded in the early suits between States." Reference to the part which the United States Government has taken in suits against States of the Union leads to the observation that while "a State of the Union may not as yet summon the United States into court . . . that will happen if the States think it to their interest" (p. 204).

In his final lecture Dr. Scott reviews the progress made since 1899 in providing means for amicable settlement of international disputes, which has culminated in the establishment of the Permanent Court of International Justice. The desirability of retaining both the old Permanent Court of Arbitration and the new World Court is emphasized. A strong argument is offered against providing means for enforcing judgments of the Permanent Court of International Justice other than the force of public opinion. Fear is expressed that a "confusion of functions" may result from the provision of the Court Statute empowering the tribunal to decide questions *ex æquo et bono*. Participation of the United States in the World Court, while not essential for the continued existence of that tribunal, would add to it stability and prestige. Such a step, if accompanied by a restoration of the plan of the Advisory Committee, would, Dr. Scott believes, make the Permanent Court "as competent . . . to administer justice between and among the nations, as the Supreme Court of the United States to administer justice between and among the States of the American Union."

The worth of this thorough study of the way in which suits between States of the American Union have been decided in the Supreme Court is readily appreciated. It is not difficult to recognize the elements of value in the analogy between American States before the Supreme Court and states in general before international tribunals. It is more difficult to entirely agree with the author's statement that, if the states of the world should be inclined to unite themselves into some form of federation and create a court of justice in which they might sue and be sued, "it would be because of the American experiment and its success" (p. 40).

The usefulness of the book is increased by an index and by the inclusion in the appendices of texts of the more important documents to which reference is made.

ROBERT R. WILSON.

THE REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIANITY. By Douglas Clyde Macintosh. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925. xiv, 293 pp.

This volume has two distinctions. In the first place, its chapters were delivered as the Taylor Lectures at Yale University last year, and the story is well known how these lectures drew the audience away from the brilliant Dean of Westminster, who was lecturing at the time upon another foundation. In the second place, the volume was awarded the decennial Bross Prize of \$6,000—a prize designed to stimulate volumes which will "show that both science and revelation coincide and prove the existence and providence of the only living and true God."

As its name indicates, *The Reasonableness of Christianity* is a book of apologetics. But it is a distinctly new and distinctly modern apologetic, and as such is interesting for its method of approach as well as for the value of its argument. The older apologists generally adopted one of two methods: they pointed to certain historical facts, as the fulfillment of prophecy, miracles, etc.; or else they attempted to show by deductive logic the validity of the doctrine. Professor Macintosh adopts neither method. On the one hand he maintains that a living religion must be empirically justified in its own

day, and on the other hand he points out that logical consistency does not prove a thing to be true or actual but only logically possible.

How then is one's faith to be tested and justified? His answer is a pragmatic one. Our actual life for the most part is lived on the basis of principles and faiths which we cannot prove reasonable or true in the same way that we would prove a proposition in geometry. Actually we adopt those ideas which appear to us as practically necessary for the realization of our purposes. These become for us working hypotheses. According to Professor Macintosh such a hypothesis is to be tested in three ways: (1) Is it permissible in the light of all the facts which are available? (2) Are the active purposes or tendencies upon which it is based "normal instincts and healthful habits, and does acting on the belief continue to foster normal and wholesome living"? (3) "Is there a logical harmony between this belief and our other critically approved beliefs, and is there a working harmony between the active tendencies fundamental to this belief and the tendencies fundamental to other beliefs?" These are the only tests of truth which can be applied. If the belief be the normal expression of a good will and a healthy mind and body, if it contains neither inconsistency nor refutation by any known facts, if its volitional basis be in harmony with our other approved beliefs and desires, then it is reasonable to take up the belief as a life attitude and to act upon it as a life-hypothesis. It is "presumably true."

This method of verification is applied to what the author declares to be the fundamental religious belief, moral optimism. It is maintained that this is the "normal human attitude." "We find that an optimistic outlook tends to be instinctive and well nigh inevitable during the health of the body, particularly of the nervous system." The alternatives, pessimism, non-moral optimism, and meliorism, are examined and rejected. Moral optimism is defined as "a fundamental attitude of confidence in the cosmos, together with a full sense of man's moral responsibility." Having established it as the normal human attitude, the author then proceeds to develop from it an apologetic for Christianity. God, freedom, and immortality are found

to be implications of this optimism and are thus established in Kantian fashion as reasonable beliefs. Yet the author does not dodge the problems connected with these subjects. His tests for truth demand congruity with all the facts available and with other beliefs which we have critically approved, and some of the best pages of his book are used in frankly facing these issues. Freedom he postulates along the lines of the work of Bergson and Hans Driesch. The problem of evil he solves on the basis of human freedom on the one hand and the beneficence of inexorable natural law on the other. Revelation he sees in the normal process of learning through experience and the special process of regeneration through right moral and spiritual adjustment. Three technical chapters on epistemology and reality "not essential to the argument" conclude the book.

There is little doubt that the work will have considerable influence. The author's undoubted religious convictions, the high favor in which he is generally held, and the need of careful thinking in the field in which he writes will give it a wide reading. The book represents the adjustment of the theological system to the facts brought to light by James and his successors as to how beliefs arise and how they are to be tested. Not all will agree that it is a satisfactory adjustment. For example, one would question whether the "presumably true" can ever be the basis for a satisfactory religious thought. A good deal more emphasis must be placed on the mystic's direct apprehension and certainty if it is proposed to lay the foundation for religious belief. In the argument as presented, furthermore, the discussion of moral optimism needs enlarging, for the treatment is far too brief and inadequate in proportion to the part in the argument which this conviction plays. Occasionally one feels that the writer goes further than his argument allows in deducing the full complement of the Christian creed. See for example the effort on page 115 to state in Trinitarian terms the theism that has been set forth. But on the other hand the discussion is vigorous, is intelligent, and is honest. The method of approach shifts the basis of theological discussion to "life-attitudes," where it rightly belongs. The thoughtful Christian, whether he agrees throughout or not, will be grateful to Pro-

fessor Macintosh for closing with an issue which scientific knowledge has made crucial and which many theologians and religionists have shown a tendency to avoid.

HARVIE BRANSCOMB.

MELLOWS: A CHRONICLE OF UNKNOWN SINGERS. By R. Emmet Kennedy. New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1925. 183 pp.

Two years ago Mr. Kennedy produced in *Black Cameos* a series of Negro character sketches in which the folk-song was an important subordinate element. The present volume centers attention on the songs, but accompanies each song with a sympathetic sketch of the reminiscent, descriptive, anecdotal variety. Thus the reader has at once both the song and its *milieu*. These sketches, together with the full and careful musical notation, the excellent black and white drawings by Simmons Persons, and the red calico binding give the book an especially persuasive atmosphere.

Some of the forty-eight songs are familiar, but with the variations that keep almost any Negro folk-song from being identical with any other song commonly called the same. Others—quite a fair proportion of the whole—are here first introduced into print from the apparently exhaustless reservoir of unpublished Negro songs. The half-dozen street cries and the five work-songs provide a fortunate variation from the usual collection, which is too exclusively absorbed in the spiritual; and the introductory chapter, while far from fundamental from the point of view of either folk-lore or psychology, is at least a step toward a real analysis of Negro folk-song.

NEWMAN I. WHITE.

THE PILGRIMAGE OF HENRY JAMES. By Van Wyck Brooks. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1925. 170 pp.

It was a pathetic pilgrimage, brave and pathetic, this which Mr. Van Wyck Brooks traces with such a deft interweaving of reminiscence, allusion, and quotation that it seems like a kind of third-person autobiography—a pilgrim's progress setting out from the barren background of American life in search of a background in which Henry James could find himself properly

fitted and fitting. All the ardent years of his long sojourn James was pursuing a phantom that always, when overtaken, was found to be an ivory tower that he did not want. For he was a social being, nourished in solitude, perpetually seeking that subtle, delicately adjusted society which alone could suit him. The American scene, so genuinely desolate and desolating for him he rejected, not without a struggle, for the "denser, warmer, richer" atmosphere of Europe, on which his imagination had fed. Rome and Paris were wonderful, exciting, but he could not sink into them and become at home. His natural austerity, for one thing, raised barriers; for another, he was simply not "accepted" as "belonging"—as in truth he did *not* belong. England received him and he made himself at home there, but the element of volition was never to be denied or forgotten; and for one born (as he said) "to discriminate *à tout propos*," cursed with a hatred of all life's little vulgarities and condemned to be a fugitive from them in search of the great world of cultured romance, where could a satisfying retreat be discovered? Not, surely, on this vulgar earth. It is enough to say that Mr. Brooks has made this unhappy pilgrimage as fascinating as one of Henry James's own romances.

P. F. B.

A HISTORY OF ECONOMIC PROGRESS IN THE UNITED STATES. By Walter W. Jennings. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1926. xvi, 819 pp.

Recently text-book writers in the social sciences have been hoping, with one accord, that although their books are written as texts that they may not be without interest to the business man. That this sentiment should find expression in the preface to *A History of Economic Progress in the United States* was inevitable. Fortunately, or unfortunately, the business man chooses his own reading and, I venture, spends very little time perusing college texts. But the luckless undergraduate has no choice. If he would achieve an education, i.e., be graduated, he must leap the hurdles which the professors set up.

The growing criticism of the text-book method of college teaching is not without some justification, at least, in so far as

it is directed against courses based on such texts as the one under consideration. "On June 30, 1925, 9,080 school buildings in 663 towns had a balance of \$20,435,144.64 in the banks from the deposits of 2,236,326 pupils," says Jennings in a typically meaty sentence one page 709. Facts, figures, dates—there are eight hundred pages crowded with them. And seemingly one is as important as another, for there is little attempt at interpretation. True, the data which have been collected are heaped in the customary piles labeled *Agriculture, Commerce, Finance*, and the like. But what meaningless aggregations they are with never a graph and but one map in the whole jejune tome to aid the reader in discovering what it is all about.

Occasionally, the author does push back the crowding figures and, in a sentence or two, make a bid for interest with illustration or anecdote. Some of these are not ill-chosen. But for the most part they are ancient and hackneyed. The story, for example, of the servant who threw water over the tobacco-smoking Sir Walter Raleigh has been told and retold in elementary and high school texts.

In spite of an excellent twenty-one page index, this economic history can be of but little value as a reference book, for it is based almost entirely upon other easily accessible texts. When primary sources are used they are too often like the single quotation from Niles' *Weekly Register* (page 286), merely reprints from some author who has actually consulted the source material. If the student or teacher wishes facts on tariff history, why shouldn't he read Taussig rather than what Jennings says Taussig says, or if he seeks enlightenment on our financial history, why shouldn't he go directly to Dewey instead of reading quotations from Dewey carefully reprinted?

In fairness the fact must be emphasized that the author has attempted to write a text in one of the most difficult fields, for to combine a significant analysis with an illuminating survey of the whole of the economic history of the United States, and that within the covers of one book, is a formidable undertaking. Doubtless this explains, at least partially, why so few have essayed the task.

GEORGE TAYLOR.

Amherst, Mass.

THE DEBATABLE LAND: A SKETCH OF THE ANGLO-SPANISH CONTEST FOR THE GEORGIA COUNTRY. By Herbert E. Bolton and Mary Ross. Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1925. Pp. xiii, 138.

ARREDONDO'S HISTORICAL PROOF OF SPAIN'S TITLE TO GEORGIA: A CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORY OF ONE OF THE SPANISH BORDERLANDS. Edited by Herbert E. Bolton. Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1925. 382 pp.

American historians generally conceive of the western movement as the expansion of the English colonists from the Atlantic seaboard to the Pacific, and the corresponding recession of the French and Spanish. But there is one school of historians which approaches the matter in just the reverse order; i.e., it emphasizes the earlier colonization of the West by men of non Anglo-American stock, the Spaniards, and traces the northward and eastward penetration of North America by the pioneers of Spain. Thus the centre of interest in western history is shifted to Mexico and the Caribbean, for from those regions radiated the forces in the Spanish colonization of North America.

An excellent by-product of such a perspective is found in these volumes. The *Debatable Land* is a description, based on manuscripts in the Spanish archives as well as published sources, of the early Spanish settlements in Georgia and the contest between the Spanish and the British for that hinterland—a story hitherto sketched but never told in such detail or from such a wealth of material. Especially valuable are the chapters on the colonization and contest for Guali, the diplomatic controversies, and the War of Jenkins' Ear. All this of course raises the question of the legality of English and Spanish titles to the disputed territory, and an answer is given in the second volume under review. It is a translation, with the original text, of a brief by Arredondo, a Spanish engineer and member of the expedition of 1742 against the English in Georgia, in which he points out not only the prior discovery by the Spanish, but also that in 1670 England and Spain agreed to the principle of actual possession, whereby English colonization as far South as Charleston was recognized by Spain and Spanish colonization as far north as Santa Elena Sound, in 32° 30' north latitude, was recognized by England; hence the English

penetration of the Georgia region was illegal and unwarranted. But nationalism knows no moral restraint, and Spanish colonization went down before the more aggressive English type.

Both volumes are useful in reconstructing the outlines of a vanished civilization—that established by Spain on the southern border of the Atlantic region.

W. K. B.

ANATOLE FRANCE HIMSELF. A Boswellian Record by his Secretary, Jean Jacques Brousson, translated by John Pollock. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1925.

Anatole France Himself is one of the two current translations of Brousson's ANATOLE FRANCE EN *Pantoufles*. The volume is in the form of an undated diary. It is a collection of anecdotes, episodes and comments which make a connected narrative covering the years during which *Jeanne d'Arc* was being prepared for publication.

I confess unblushingly that I enjoyed the book. I got a series of shocks and surprises such as the venerable Academician doubtless intended to give. At first I thought I was learning a good many things about him, but a study of all the available material on his life leaves me in doubt. A friend who heard me chuckling over a particularly sparkling episode asked for the book, read it half way through, and returned it, saying, "I don't see anything funny about it. He was a regular old satyr." And perhaps he was. Perhaps! Anatole France was a timid man. He lived largely in his mind and in his books. The more I ponder, the more I think he was "stringing" his serious-minded secretary, the "young man from the country." The evidence is in the preface.

At dessert Madame makes a signal that the moment has come. The master speaks with a rush, and in the staccato tone of an alarm clock going off.

"It appears, my young friend, that you keep a record of everything I say."

"Of everything you say; Master?"

"That you note down carefully in the evening what you have heard during the day."

Madame: "It is intolerable!"

I explain: "I share a banquet fit for kings: it is only charity to pick up the crumbs for the poor who are outside—for posterity."

A glimpse of blue is seen in the stormy sky.

"For posterity! For posterity! What is posterity? It is you. It is

I. It is Madame. We are all some one's posterity."

"I am doing for you, Master, what Florianet did for Voltaire—"

"I am not Voltaire, but you are Florianet."

"I am not Florianet, and you are Voltaire. What the Abbé Leduc did for Bossuet."

"You exceed the Abbé Leduc in devotion, and I am not the Eagle of Meaux. What pleasure can you find in picking up the careless words that trickle down my old beard? A sadly perverted taste. After all, if you find it amusing—! And then, who can stop you? What I ask of you, my young friend, is not to publish any of this in my lifetime: you will not have long to wait. You would make me quarrel with too many people. When I am under the sod, make me say whatever you will. (Turning to Madame). Now, it would be indiscretion. Then, it will be erudition."

That was too good a challenge to remain unaccepted. There is much internal evidence that the old Academician had no mean histrionic ability. He is playing a rôle.

Some of the episodes are Rabelaisian, to be sure. Anatole France is not for the innocent and the unsophisticated, if there be any such these days. His books are on the "Index," where they ought to be. But anyone to whom the Index is a beacon instead of a taboo will find in him both sensual and intellectual enjoyment.

The translation reads very well, except for a few colloquial expressions which are rendered in British slang instead of American. In places it departs from the spirit of the original—but how many of our current translators are thorough masters of the idiom they attempt to render? The statements in the "blurb" on the paper jacket, descriptive of the contents, are unusually accurate. But France does not "chaff his shrewish wife." He is at this time living in single and monastic blessedness between two marriages and under the guardianship of a tyrannical old servant. "Madame" is the wife of an old friend and editor who is much in evidence in several entertaining episodes.

F. A. G. COWPER.

HORACE AND HIS ART OF ENJOYMENT. By Elizabeth Hazelton Haight.
New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1925. 276 pp.

The student who read Horace during his school days will find keen pleasure in the retrospection which Miss Haight's chapters invite. Many a once familiar line, fact, or incident recurs, with the added pleasure of the reconstructed historical setting and helpful explanations.

In the first fifty pages ("The Poet and His Time; The Making of a Poet") she presents in most readable fashion the early life of Horace as a preparation for his later prominence, but she mars the discussion by inserting several pages of insistence on his being an eques—an unproved, if not disproved, assertion. In the following chapter ("Patronage and the Poet") there is a clear and timely review of the patron-client system which paves the way for a review of Horace's relation to his wealthy patron, Maecenas, donor of the Sabine farm. Then the author proceeds to waive the well known literary convention of dialogue and take Horace all too seriously in the opening satire of the second book, one of the outstanding humorous and witty satires. The result is that she has made the well known lawyer Trebatius not only a determining and great influence in Horace's literary career, but also a patron! All this just because he is represented as Horace's interlocutor in this satire.

The burden of the next chapter is Horace's important rôle in assisting Augustus by means of his poetry in the rebuilding of the Roman state, a subject which the author has well in hand. Her picture of "Life in Rome through Horace's Eyes," while entertaining enough, is a hodge-podge of over-interpretation which smacks of propaganda for making ancient Rome fairly buzz in the reader's ear.

If we may anywhere accuse Miss Haight of "fine writing" it is in "Country Days," a guide-bookish chapter in which we are introduced to the subject in general and to certain well known ancient villas in some detail by way of preparation for a visit to the probable site of the Sabine farm, and thence to his Tiburtine villa (if Horace had one, and Miss Haight seems sure that he did). The reviewer shares her enthusiasm for the Horace country, if not her conviction of Horace's sincerity of

devotion to the country. She would prove in a detailed chapter of citations Horace's keen "Feeling for Nature," but, obviously inadvertently, overthrows much of her argument in the last paragraph by saying, "Perhaps Horace's feeling for nature is shown most of all in his delight in particular places in Italy," and then citing places whose present-day beauty is forced on even the most untutored.

The last quarter of the book, "Religion and Philosophy," is in most respects admirable, particularly the review of the rôle which magic and astrology played in Roman religion. But the author is led into pitfalls of misrepresentation by trying to support her "three rather distinct periods" in "Horace's personal attitude toward the gods and man's relation to them," to wit: "an attitude of criticism of worship that is quasi-irreverent and nearly satirical, a time of acceptance and support of Octavian's renaissance of religion, and a final shifting of posture from the bent knee of religious faith to the erect body and uplifted head of philosophical inquiry." These three periods intermingle chronologically. Perhaps she does not take sufficiently seriously the fact that in the second "period," at least, Horace is the propagandist for Augustus. Here, as in other discussions, there is a tendency to catalogue as biographical material which literary convention imposed upon Horace, to assume that Horace's characters are expressing his own views, and to make him serious when perhaps he would not be.

After a very sane summary of Horace's philosophy the author, by way of conclusion, catches up the thread of the "art of enjoyment" which she started spinning in the opening chapter, but lost in the elaborate weaving of her tapestry. It is disappointing that so little attention is paid to the most attractive title. Had she heeded this, her book would doubtless have been more of a contribution. We could wish that such an enthusiastic student of Horace had called this book "Horace: Interpretive Essays," and reserved for another opus "Horace and His Art of Enjoyment."

R. R. ROSBOROUGH.

THE SPIRIT OF THE REVOLUTION. By John C. Fitzpatrick. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1924.

In this volume Mr. Fitzpatrick has put together a group of studies of certain incidents and phases of the Revolution about which little has been known. Footnotes and references have been purposely omitted, but the author writes so simply and sincerely and has used his sources in so scholarly a way that the reader does not question his authority although he may not always accept his interpretation.

Two of the chapters most interesting to historians are those on the origin and discovery of the Declaration of Independence. Mr. Fitzpatrick has found in the Library of Congress an old manuscript which until recently was not known to exist. This is a six page manuscript in Jefferson's handwriting, written sometime between May 27 and June 10, 1776, which contains Jefferson's ideas on a constitution for Virginia but which reached Williamsburg too late to be of any use except for the Preamble. This, which gave many reasons for Virginia's repudiation of allegiance to George III, was adopted by the Convention. When, some two weeks later, Jefferson drew up the draft of the Declaration of Independence he used this preamble with slight alterations, and what Mr. Fitzpatrick believes to have been a condensation of the Virginia Bill of Rights written by George Mason and Richard Henry Lee's resolution of independence, which had been introduced into the Continental Congress by the Virginia delegates.

It may well be that the Virginia Bill of Rights was the inspiration for Jefferson's first phrases and certainly he would have seen it before drafting the Declaration; but such ideas, couched in much the same phraseology, had so long been current in the colonies that Jefferson might easily have written his first sentences without reference to Mason's work. Whether or not Jefferson was so greatly indebted to Mason, there is no doubt that the Declaration of Independence is almost wholly the work of Virginians.

Before the final adoption of Jefferson's draft by Congress it was changed in certain details by Benjamin Franklin and

John Adams. This has long been known, but a more careful study of the manuscript since it was transferred in 1922 from the State Department to the Library of Congress shows that Franklin made more changes than have heretofore been credited to him. These, if only a word or two, seem always to have given added strength and directness to Jefferson's phrases.

Among these sketches are several of men whose devoted and able work have never won attention from the historian, such as the aides of Washington, the post-riders, the drummers and fifers, and the bakers of bread for the fast-moving army. The devotion of the honest old gingerbread baker of Philadelphia, Christopher Ludwick, who was appointed by the Continental Congress to be "Superintendent of Bakers and Director of Baking in the Grand Army of the United States," is vividly pictured, as is the stubborn courage of Andrew Paton, captain of the "good ship *Margareta*," who finding it impossible to gain his liberty from suspicious British officers by fair means, "determined to have it by fowl."

This is an interesting book to antiquarian, historian and general reader. All through it runs the admiration of the author for General Washington, an admiration which the reader of these sketches cannot help but share.

A. M. BALDWIN.

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